E/1996/36
E/ESCAP/1044

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

ANNUAL REPORT

2 May 1995-24 April 1996

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

OFFICIAL RECORDS, 1996

SUPPLEMENT No. 16

UNITED NATIONS

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NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACPR	Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AIDA	Asia Infrastructure Development Alliance
ALTID	Asian land transport infrastructure development
APCTT	Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology
APDC	Asian and Pacific Development Centre
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
CCOP	Coordinating Committee for Coastal and Offshore Geoscience Programmes in East and Southeast Asia
CGPRT Centre	Regional Coordination Centre for Research and Development of Coarse Grains, Pulses, Roots and Tuber Crops in the Humid Tropics of Asia and the Pacific
DESCONAP	Regional Network of Research and Training Centres on Desertification Control in Asia and the Pacific
ECDC	economic cooperation among developing countries
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe
ESCAP/POC	ESCAP Pacific Operations Centre
GSP	generalized system of preferences
HIV/AIDS	human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMO	International Maritime Organization
MRC	Mekong River Commission
ODA	official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
RESAP	Regional Space Applications Programme
RICAP	Regional Inter-agency Committee for Asia and the Pacific
RNAM	Regional Network for Agricultural Machinery
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SIAP	Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific
SNA	United Nations System of National Accounts
TCDC	technical cooperation among developing countries
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

ABBREVIATIONS *(continued)*

UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
WTO	World Trade Organization

Introduction

1. The annual report of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, which covers the period 2 May 1995 to 24 April 1996, was adopted unanimously by the Commission at the thirteenth meeting of its fifty-second session on 24 April 1996.

Chapter I

ISSUES CALLING FOR ACTION BY THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL OR BROUGHT TO ITS ATTENTION

A. Issues calling for action by the Economic and Social Council

Amendment of the terms of reference of the Commission

2. At the first meeting of its fifty-second session, the Commission approved the following draft resolutions for submission to the Economic and Social Council for action.

Change of the name of Hong Kong to Hong Kong, China in the terms of reference of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

"*The Economic and Social Council,*

"*Noting* that the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific has recommended that the name 'Hong Kong' in paragraphs 2 and 4 of the terms of reference of the Commission be changed to 'Hong Kong, China', effective from 1 July 1997, with the objective of enabling Hong Kong to continue thereafter as an associate member of the Commission,

"*Decides* to amend paragraphs 2 and 4 of the terms of reference of the Commission accordingly."

Admission of Palau as a member of the Commission

"*The Economic and Social Council,*

"*Noting* that Palau has become a member of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in accordance with paragraph 3 of the terms of reference of the Commission,

"*Decides* to amend paragraphs 3 and 4 of the terms of reference of the Commission accordingly."

Admission of Turkey as a member of the Commission

"*The Economic and Social Council,*

"*Noting* that the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific has recommended the admission of Turkey as a member within the geographical scope of the Commission,

"*Decides* to amend paragraphs 2 and 3 of the terms of reference of the Commission accordingly."

B. Resolutions brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council

52/1. Preparation for the review of the conference structure of the Commission

52/2. Shanghai symposium to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of ESCAP

52/3. Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women

52/4. Promoting human resources development among youth in Asia and the Pacific

52/5. Regional cooperation in response to the spread and consequences of the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome in the Asian and Pacific region

52/6. Promotion of environmentally sound and healthy cities

52/7. Transfer of environmentally sound technology

52/8. Third Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific

52/9. Intra-Asia and Asia-Europe land bridges

52/10. Revised Action Programme for Regional Economic Cooperation in Trade and Investment

52/11. Strengthening of subregional economic cooperation among the south-western member countries of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, including the member countries of the Economic Cooperation Organization

Chapter II

WORK OF THE COMMISSION SINCE THE FIFTY-FIRST SESSION

A. Activities of subsidiary bodies

3. During the period under review, the following subsidiary bodies convened meetings: Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation, Committee on Poverty Alleviation through Economic Growth and Social Development and the Committee on Transport and Communications. The Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development was convened. The dates, bureaux and document symbols of the reports of the meetings are given in annex III to the present report. The reports of those bodies to the Commission reflect the discussions held, the agreements reached and the decisions taken by them.

B. Other activities

4. Lists of publications issued, meetings held and advisory services provided since the fifty-first session, under the programme of work, 1994-1995, of the Commission, are annexed to the present chapter. To the extent possible the technical cooperation among developing countries modality was applied in these activities, as reported in document E/ESCAP/1035. As this is the first report to present the work of the Commission on a calendar-year basis, the lists contained in the annexes cover the work carried out in the final eight months of 1995 only. Subsequent annual reports will list activities for a full calendar year.

5. The secretariat maintained close and regular liaison with United Nations Headquarters and cooperated with the Departments concerned, as well as with the secretariats of the other regional commissions on projects of common interest.

C. Relations with other United Nations programmes

6. The cooperation of the Commission with specialized United Nations agencies and other international organizations, particularly through the Regional Inter-agency Committee for Asia and the Pacific, is described in document E/ESCAP/1036.

Annex

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS, MEETINGS AND ADVISORY SERVICES

A. List of publications

Regional economic cooperation

Asia-Pacific Development Journal, vol. 2, No. 1, June 1995 (ST/ESCAP/1553)

Capability for Acquisition and Use of Selected Technologies: Patent Laws, Regulations and Organizational Structure in the Asian and Pacific Region (ST/ESCAP/1483)

Development Papers: The Lessons of East/South-East Asian Growth Experience (ST/ESCAP/1474); *Macroeconomic Reforms in the Economies in Transition* (ST/ESCAP/1538)

Directory of Trade and Investment-related Organizations of Developing Countries and Areas, seventh edition (ST/ESCAP/1605)

Electronic Commerce Initiatives of ESCAP: *Role of Electronic Commerce in Trade Facilitation* (ST/ESCAP/1537); *Electronic Data Interchange - A Management Overview: Training Transparencies* (ST/ESCAP/1502); *Training Module* (ST/ESCAP/1503); *Trainers' Manual* (ST/ESCAP/1529)

Fertilizer Trade Information Monthly Bulletin, April 1995-December 1995

Foreign Investment Incentive Schemes: 15. *Lao People's Democratic Republic* (ST/ESCAP/1491)

Implications of the Uruguay Round Agreements for the Asian and Pacific Region (ST/ESCAP/1535)

Information, Education and Communication Programmes for Popularizing Appropriate Technology for Food Processing and Storage (ST/ESCAP/1479)

Issues and Experiences in Tax System Reforms in Selected Countries of the ESCAP Region (ST/ESCAP/1564)

Management of Economic Reforms (ST/ESCAP/1575)

Prices of Selected Asia-Pacific Products, April 1995-October 1995

Privatization: Issues and Prospects (ST/ESCAP/1439)

Small Industry Bulletin for Asia and the Pacific, No. 29 (ST/ESCAP/SER.M/46)

Social Accounting Matrix-based Macro Models for Policy Analysis in Developing Countries (ST/ESCAP/1540)

Strategies for the Technological Transformation of Selected Asian and Pacific Economies through Regional Cooperation (ST/ESCAP/1246)

Studies in Trade and Investment: 4. *Towards a More Vibrant Pepper Economy* (ST/ESCAP/1494); 6. *Review and Analysis of Intraregional Trade Flows in Asia and the Pacific* (ST/ESCAP/1506); 7. *Prospects of Economic Development through Cooperation in North-East Asia* (ST/ESCAP/1472); 8. *An Analysis of Fiji's Export Potential to Asia* (ST/ESCAP/1511); 9. *Development of the Export-oriented Electronic Goods Sector in Asia and the Pacific* (ST/ESCAP/1512); 10. *Assessing the Potential and Direction of Agricultural Trade within the ESCAP Region* (ST/ESCAP/1517); 11. *Benefits and Challenges Facing Asia-Pacific Agricultural Trading Countries in the Post-Uruguay Round Period* (ST/ESCAP/1526); 12. *Trade Prospects for the Year 2000 and Beyond for the Asian and Pacific Region* (ST/ESCAP/1516)

Technological Transaction Patterns for Enhancing Regional Cooperation in the Field of Biotechnology (ST/ESCAP/1497)

TISNET Trade Information Bulletin, Nos. 294-308

Environment and sustainable development

Agro-Chemicals News in Brief, vol. XVIII, No. 1-3, January-March 1995-July-September 1995

Asia-Pacific Environment, vol. 1, No. 1-2, January-March 1995-April-June 1995; Special issue: *Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, 22-28 November 1995*

Asia-Pacific Remote Sensing Journal, vol. 8, No. 1, July 1995

Assessment of Water Resources and Water Demand by User Sectors in Myanmar (ST/ESCAP/1573)

Atlas of Mineral Resources of the ESCAP Region, vol. 11, *Afghanistan* (ST/ESCAP/1612); vol. 12, *Myanmar* (ST/ESCAP/1634)

Calendar of Meetings on Agro-Chemicals, vol. 14, No. 2-4, April 1995-October 1995

Confluence, Nos. 24-26, December 1994-December 1995

Development and Management of Non-living Resources in the Coastal Zones of the Asia-Pacific Region, vol. 1: *Towards Integrated Coastal Zone Management* (ST/ESCAP/1577)

Electric Power in Asia and the Pacific, 1991 and 1992 (ST/ESCAP/1624)

Energy Efficiency: Directory of Energy Consultants, Service Companies, Manufacturers and Distributors of Energy Efficient Equipment and Appliances in Asia (ST/ESCAP/1490)

Energy Efficiency Guidebook for Energy Consultants and Service Companies in Asia (ST/ESCAP/1514)

Energy End-use Efficiency Promotion in Asian Developing Countries (ST/ESCAP/1509)

Energy, Environment and Sustainable Development II (ST/ESCAP/1623)

Energy Environment Planning in Developing Countries: Methodological Guide (ST/ESCAP/1531); *Programmer's Guide* (ST/ESCAP/1532); *User's and Technical Guide* (ST/ESCAP/1534)

Environmental News Briefing, vol. 9, No. 3-6

ESCAP Energy News, vol. XII, Nos. 1-2

Geographic Information Systems and Remote Sensing Guidelines for Use by Planners and Decision Makers (ST/ESCAP/1615)

Guidebook on Energy Environment Planning in Developing Countries: Synthesis Report on Energy-environment Studies in Asia (part I) (ST/ESCAP/1569); *Training Materials on Energy-environment Studies in Asia* (part II) (ST/ESCAP/1570)

Guidebook on Energy Survey (ST/ESCAP/1520)

Healthy Cities in Asia: A Diagnostic Manual (ST/ESCAP/1576)

Incorporating Sustainable Development Considerations into Economic Decision-making: the Case of Solomon Islands and Vanuatu (ST/ESCAP/1614)

Industrial Minerals Development in Asia and the Pacific (ST/ESCAP/1476)

Information Management System for Analysis of Energy-environment Data: DBA-VOID - Technical Manual (ST/ESCAP/1524); *User's Manual* (ST/ESCAP/1525)

Mineral Resource Potential and Policy for Development in the Asian LDCs and Viet Nam: Mineral Concentrations and Hydrocarbon Accumulations in the ESCAP Region (ST/ESCAP/1635)

Natural Hazards and Natural Disaster Reduction in Asia and the Pacific (ST/ESCAP/1574)

Private Sector Participation in Power Generation and Its Consequences on Environmental Quality (ST/ESCAP/1515)

Proceedings of the Regional Workshop on Remote Sensing and GIS for Land and Marine Resources and Environment Management in the Pacific Subregion, Suva, 16-19 February 1995 (ST/ESCAP/1545)

Protection of Water Resources, Water Quality and Aquatic Ecosystem in Asia and the Pacific (ST/ESCAP/1481)

Regional Information Support Service, vol. 18, Nos. 12-13; vol. 19, No.1

Remote Sensing and Geographic Information Systems for Land and Water Resources Management: Proceedings of the Regional Seminar on Integrated Applications of Remote Sensing and Geographic Information Systems for Land and Water Resources Management, Bangalore, India, 16-19 November 1994 (ST/ESCAP/1498)

Remote Sensing for Tropical Ecosystem Management: Report of the Regional Remote Sensing Seminar on Tropical Ecosystem Management, Bali, Indonesia, 23-28 August 1994 (ST/ESCAP/1455)

Remote Sensing Newsletter, vol. 13, Nos. 1-2

Report of the Regional Remote Sensing Seminar on Tropical Ecosystem Management, Subic, Philippines, 4-9 September 1995 (ST/ESCAP/1583)

Report of the Working Group Meeting on the Regional Information Service and Education Networks of the Regional Space Applications Programme (ST/ESCAP/1619)

Resource Assessment, Development and Management: Mineral Recovery, Recycling, Waste Prevention and Confinement for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific (ST/ESCAP/1554)

Safe Handling and Application of Agro-pesticides: A Safety Guide for Pesticide Retail Distributors and Shopkeepers (in Bislama, Vanuatu); (in Hindustani, Fiji); (in Samoan)

Sectoral Energy Demand Analysis and Long-term Forecast for Developing Countries: MEDEE-S - Methodological Manual (ST/ESCAP/1521); *Technical Manual* (ST/ESCAP/1522); *User's Manual* (ST/ESCAP/1523)

Space Technology and Applications for Sustainable Development: Proceedings of the Symposium on Space Technology Applications for Sustainable Development, Beijing, China, 19-21 September 1994 (ST/ESCAP/1499)

State of the Environment in Asia and the Pacific 1995 (ST/ESCAP/1585)

Water Resources Journal, September 1994-December 1995 (ST/ESCAP/SER.C/182-187)

Water Resources Series: *Integrated Water Resources Management in Asia and the Pacific*, No. 75 (ST/ESCAP/SER.F/75); *Guidebook on Water Resources, Use and Management in Asia and the Pacific* (ST/ESCAP/SER.F/74)

Poverty alleviation through economic growth and social development

1996 ESCAP Population Data Sheet

Annotated Bibliography on Policy and Programme Issues in the Field of Ageing (ST/ESCAP/1471)

Asia-Pacific Fact Sheet on Drug Demand Reduction and HIV/AIDS Prevention, No. 5

Asia-Pacific Population Information Network: A Directory and Profile of the Secretariat and Members

Asia-Pacific Population Journal, vol. 10, Nos. 1-4

Causes, Characteristics and Consequences of Poverty: Reasons for and Modalities of the Use of Targeting in Selected Poverty Alleviation Programmes in the ESCAP Region (ST/ESCAP/1591)

Community-based Drug Demand Reduction and HIV/AIDS Prevention: A Manual for Planners, Practitioners, Trainers and Evaluators (ST/ESCAP/1584)

Community-based Drug Demand Reduction: Report on Five Demonstration Projects (ST/ESCAP/1552)

Compendium of United Nations Programmes on Rural Poverty Alleviation 1994-1995 (ST/ESCAP/1530)

Directory of National Focal Points for the Advancement of Women in Asia and the Pacific 1995 (ST/ESCAP/1489)

Enhancing the Role of NGOs in the Implementation of the Agenda for Action on Social Development in the ESCAP Region (ST/ESCAP/1625)

Functional Literacy for Women's Empowerment in South Asia (ST/ESCAP/1567)

Guidelines for the Promotion of Non-handicapping Physical Environments for Disabled Persons (ST/ESCAP/1492)

Hidden Sisters: Women and Girls with Disabilities in the Asian and Pacific Region (ST/ESCAP/1548)

Informal Sector and Urban Poverty Alleviation in Asia and the Pacific (ST/ESCAP/1600)

Legislation on Equal Opportunities and Full Participation in Development for Disabled Persons: A Regional Review (ST/ESCAP/1622)

Manual for Preparing Population Information Directories, using CDS/ISIS (ST/ESCAP/1595)

Population Headliners, Nos. 241-249

Poverty Alleviation Initiatives, vol. 5, No. 1

Promotion of Non-handicapping Physical Environments for Disabled Persons: Case Studies (ST/ESCAP/1510)

Regional Information Base on Poverty Issues: A Review of the Incidence of Poverty and Target-oriented Poverty Alleviation Programmes (ST/ESCAP/1568)

Review of Current Research in Urban Issues (computer database)

Self-help Organizations of Disabled Persons (translated into five national languages: Bangla, Indonesian, Khmer, Thai and Vietnamese) and English Braille (ST/ESCAP/1087)

Social Development Newsletter, Nos. 32-33

Trends, Patterns and Implications of Rural-urban Migration in India, Nepal and Thailand (APSS No. 138) (ST/ESCAP/1572)

WINAP Newsletter, Nos. 16-17

Transport and communications

Asian Highway Network Development (ST/ESCAP/1442)

Asian Highway Route Map (large scale), 1995

Asian Highway Route Map (small scale), 1995

Commercial Aspects of Inland Water Transport Operations and Management (ST/ESCAP/1626)

Commercialization of Transport Business Undertakings (ST/ESCAP/1630)

Computerized Asset Management System (ST/ESCAP/1608)

Decade News, Nos. 6-7

Development of Freight Forwarding in the ESCAP Region (ST/ESCAP/1631)

Development of Multimodal Transport in the ESCAP Region (ST/ESCAP/1563)

Development of Urban Transport: The Case of Balanced Transport Development in Asian Cities (ST/ESCAP/1606)

ESCAP Tourism Newsletter, No. 6

ESCAP Tourism Review: *Tourism Training in the Asian Region*, No. 14 (ST/ESCAP/1397); *Review of Tourism Development in the ESCAP Region*, No. 15

Inland Water Transport Module Software

Land Transport Linkages from Central Asia to Seaports in the South and the East (ST/ESCAP/1560)

Maritime Manpower for the Shipping Industry in the Asia-Pacific Region (ST/ESCAP/1629)

Proceedings of the Seminar-Cum-Study Tour on Compressed Natural Gas Technologies for Road Transport, Germany, 30 August-11 September 1993 (ST/ESCAP/1460)

Railway Break-of-Gauge Problem and Possible Solutions in the ESCAP Region (ST/ESCAP/1636)

Report on the Identification of Major Problems on Urban Transport in the ESCAP Region (second phase) (ST/ESCAP/1486)

Review of Developments in Transport, Communications and Tourism (ST/ESCAP/1620)

Road Safety in the ESCAP Region, vol. I (ST/ESCAP/1633)

Study on Foreign Investment in the Tourism Sector in Samoa (ST/ESCAP/1426)

Study on Foreign Investment in the Tourism Sector in Vanuatu (ST/ESCAP/1427)

Transport and Communications Bulletin for Asia and the Pacific, No. 65 (ST/ESCAP/SER.E/65-66)

Statistics

Asia-Pacific in Figures 1995 (ST/ESCAP/1588)

Foreign Trade Statistics of Asia and the Pacific, 1989-1993 (ST/ESCAP/1589)

Government Computerization Newsletter, No. 6, December 1995

Statistical Indicators for Asia and the Pacific, vol. XXV, No. 1 (ST/ESCAP/1513), No. 2 (ST/ESCAP/1543), No. 3 (ST/ESCAP/1571), No. 4 (ST/ESCAP/1586)

Statistical Newsletter, Nos. 94-98

Least developed, landlocked and island developing countries

Early Development Experience of the Newly Industrializing Economies: Lessons for the Least Developed Countries of the Asian and Pacific Region (ST/ESCAP/1555)

Improving the Access of Women to Formal Credit and Financial Institutions: Windows of Opportunity (ST/ESCAP/1601)

Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s: the Asian and Pacific Region (ST/ESCAP/1550)

Public Expenditure in the Provision of Social Services in Bangladesh and Nepal (ST/ESCAP/1607)

B. List of meetings

Regional economic cooperation

Expert Group Meeting on the Follow-up to the Delhi Declaration on Strengthening Regional Economic Cooperation in Asia and the Pacific towards the Twenty-first Century, New Delhi, April 1995

Informal Consultation Meeting of the Bangkok Agreement, Bangkok, April 1995

United Nations Conference on the Effective Use of Information Technologies for Trade and Investment, Bangkok, May 1995

National Workshop on Economic Reform, Ashgabad, May 1995; Bishkek, May 1995; Yerevan, October 1995; Dushanbe, November 1995; Baku, December 1995

Expert Consultative Meeting on Intraregional Trade in Rice, Bangkok, May 1995

National Seminar on Promotion of Intraregional Trade in the Asia-Pacific Region, New Delhi, May 1995

ESCAP Network on Trade Facilitation (3rd meeting), Bangkok, June 1995

Round Table on Economic Cooperation Possibilities through Exploitation of Trade and Investment Complementarities in the North-East Asian Subregion, Seoul, July 1995

ESCAP/UNDP/Marga Institute National Seminar on Networking of Trade-related Research Institutions in Asia and the Pacific, Colombo, July 1995

Drafting Workshop on Outlines for Trade and Environment Studies, Bangkok, August 1995

UNCTAD/ESCAP Regional Seminar on the Integration of the Non-WTO Member Countries in the Region into the International Trading System, Bangkok, August 1995

Steering Group of the Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation (7th meeting), Ulaanbaatar, September 1995

Workshop on Foreign Investment Promotion, Suva, September 1995

ESCAP/UNDP Working Group Meeting on the Implementation of the Regional Investment Information and Promotion Service, Bangkok, September 1995

Symposium on Regional Cooperation in Plant-growth Regulators for Asia and the Pacific, Beijing, October 1995

Regional Meeting of Ministers of Industry of Asia and the Pacific, New Delhi, October 1995

Planning Workshop on the APCTT Work Plan for 1997-1999, New Delhi, October 1995

Symposium on Strengthening the Private Sector in Enhancing Manufacturing Competitiveness, Seoul, November 1995

APCTT Technical Advisory Committee (eleventh session), New Delhi, December 1995

Second Meeting of the Working Committee on the Sixth Asia-Pacific International Trade Fair (ASPAT'96), Bangkok, December 1995

APCTT Governing Board (tenth session), New Delhi, December 1995

Introductory Seminar on Export Credit and Finance for Senior Executive/Financial Managers, Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi, Viet Nam, December 1995

Expert Group Meeting on the Enhancement of Technology Flows from Advanced Developing Countries to Least Developed Countries in Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, December 1995

Development of Country-specific Models for Trade Policy Analysis in Asia and the Pacific, New Delhi, December 1995

Workshop on Development Experiences of ASEAN for Indo-China, Vientiane, December 1995

Workshop on the Use and Application of Electronic Data Interchange in International Trade, Kathmandu, December 1995

Introductory Seminar on Export Marketing for Senior Executive/Export Managers, Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam, December 1995

Planning Meeting on Activities for Trade Expansion in Pulses, Bangkok, December 1995

Expert Group Meeting on the Bangkok Agreement, Bangkok, December 1995

Environment and sustainable development

Asia-Pacific Meeting on the Follow-up to the International Convention to Combat Desertification, Yangon, April 1995

Workshop for Executives of Energy Conservation and Efficiency Centres in Asia, Seoul, May 1995

Expert Group Meeting on the Feasibility of Establishing a Regional Waste Exchange Data Bank, Bangkok, May 1995

Expert Group Meeting on the Environmental Impact of Coastal Development, Bangkok, May 1995

Regional Workshop on Wind Energy Development and Utilization, Beijing, May 1995

Workshop on Fertilizer Legislation, Pokhara, Nepal, May 1995

Meeting of the Working Party of Senior Geologists, Bangkok, May-June 1995

Inter-agency Task Force on Water for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok (thirty-fifth session), June 1995; (thirty-sixth session), December 1995

Meeting of the Directors of National Remote Sensing Centres/Programmes in the ESCAP Region (Regional Network on RS/GIS), Dhaka, June 1995

Subregional Workshop on Fertilizer Sector Development in Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, Almaty, June 1995

Training Course on Energy Conservation, Ulaanbaatar, June 1995

Intergovernmental Consultative Committee on Space Applications for Sustainable Development, Dhaka, June 1995

Consultative Meeting on Demand-side Management in Integrated Resource Planning of the Power Sector, Bangkok, June 1995

Workshop-cum-Training Course on Environmental and Urban Geology of Fast-growing Cities, Shanghai, China, June 1995

Inter-agency Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok (5th meeting), July 1995; (6th meeting), August 1995

Regional Technical Meeting Preparatory to the Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, Port Vila, July 1995

Asia-Pacific Renewable Energy Symposium, Sydney, Australia, July-August 1995

Regional Training Workshop on Review and Application of Methodologies and Procedures for Integrating Environmental Considerations into Energy Planning Policy Analysis, Bangkok, July-August 1995

Preparatory Meeting for the Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, August 1995

Training Course on Wind Erosion Control, Lanzhou, China, August 1995

Training Workshop on Demand-side Management in Integrated Resource Planning of the Power Sector, Bangkok, August-September 1995

Regional Seminar on Tropical Ecosystem Management, Subic, Philippines, September 1995

FADINAP/FAI/NFS Fertilizer Marketing Management Training Seminar, Colombo, September 1995

Training Workshop on Flood Risk Analysis and Mapping, Nepal, September 1995

Expert Meeting on the Implications of Agenda 21 for Integrated Water Management in Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, September 1995

Expert Working Group Meeting on Guidelines for Geographic Information Systems Standards and Standardization Procedures, Kuala Lumpur, September 1995

Training Seminar on the Removal and Disposal of Obsolete Offshore Installations and Structures in the Exclusive Economic Zone and on the Continental Shelf, Bangkok, September 1995

Regional Workshop on Investment Promotion in the Domestic Manufacturing of Energy-efficient Products, Manila, September 1995

Senior Expert Group Meeting on Energy Resiliency and the Integration of the Environment into Energy Policy and Planning, Bangkok, October 1995

ASEAN Subregional Consultative Meeting on the Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, October 1995

Inter-agency Subcommittee on the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development, Bangkok, October 1995

Workshop on Balanced Fertilizer Use to Increase Crop Yields and Improve the Environment, Hue, Viet Nam, November 1995

International Workshop on Water-related Problems in Low-lying Coastal Areas - Hydrocoast 95, Bangkok, November 1995

Technical Symposium on Gas Pricing and Investment Round Table, Beijing, November 1995

Working Group Meeting on the Regional Information Services and Education Networks of the Regional Space Applications Programme, Nakorn Ratchasima, Thailand, November 1995

Preparatory Meeting of Senior Officials on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, November 1995

NGO/Media Symposium on Environment and Development: Strategies for 2000, Bangkok, November 1995

Seminar on Environmentalist Business Management, Bangkok, November 1995

Sustainable Development Forum 1995, Bangkok, November 1995

Regional Fertilizer Conference for Asia and the Pacific, Perth, Australia, November 1995

Panel of Experts on Desertification Control in Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, December 1995

Typhoon Committee (twenty-eighth session), Kuala Lumpur, December 1995

Energy-Environment Advisory Group of the Programme for Asian Cooperation on Energy and the Environment, Bangkok, December 1995

Workshop on the Panel of Experts on Desertification Control in Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, December 1995

Poverty alleviation through economic growth and social development

National Workshop on the Training of Trainers for Youth Participation in Development, Welimada, Sri Lanka, March-April 1995; Vientiane, October 1995; Phnom Penh, December 1995

Training in the Success-Case-Replication Methodology, Sri Lanka, April 1995

POPIN Workshop on Population Information in the Pacific, Suva, April 1995

National Workshop on the Effects of Price Liberalization and Market Reforms on Rural Poverty, Beijing, Hanoi, New Delhi, May 1995; Kuala Lumpur, July 1995; Jakarta, September 1995; Bangkok, October 1995

Regional Seminar on Population Change, Development and Women's Role and Status, Bangkok, May 1995

Workshop on Coordination of the Rawalpindi-Islamabad Metropolitan Area, Islamabad, May 1995

Asia-Pacific POPIN Consultative Workshop, Bangkok, June 1995

Expert Group Meeting on Training of Local-level Officials in Concepts and Issues of Public Participation, Rayong, Thailand, June 1995

Global POPIN Technical Workshop, Bangkok, June 1995

Global POPIN Advisory Committee Meeting, Bangkok, June 1995

Expert Group Meeting of Least Developed Countries on the Implementation of the Jakarta Declaration for the Advancement of Women in Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, June 1995

Training Workshop for Women with Disabilities, Bangkok, June 1995

Meeting to Review the Progress of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002, Bangkok, June 1995

National Workshop on a Women's Information Network in Nepal, Kathmandu, July 1995

Regional Workshop on the Enhancement of Employment Opportunities for Rural Women, Chiang Mai, Thailand, July 1995

Expert Group Meeting on the Study on the Status of Women in Poverty, Bangkok, August 1995

Technical Workshop on the Indigenous Production and Distribution of Assistive Devices, Madras, India, September 1995

Expert Group Meeting on the Linkages between Population and Poverty, Bangkok, September 1995

International Training Course on Dwelling Construction Technology, Nanjing, China, September 1995

National Planning and Training Workshop for the Project on Poverty Alleviation through Market-generated Rural Employment, Mongolia and Nepal, September 1995

Expert Group Meeting on the Role of the Informal Service Sector in Poverty Alleviation, Bangkok, September 1995

Regional Training Seminar on Promoting Human Resources Development Services for the Poor, Manila, September 1995

Regional Workshop on the Manufacture and Extension of Agricultural Machinery, Tehran, September 1995

Workshop on the Use of Urban Forums as Consultative Mechanisms for Urban Planning and Policy-making, Bangkok, September 1995

Inter-agency Subcommittee on the Advancement of Women, Bangkok, October 1995

Regional Workshop on Distance Education as an Aspect of Human Resources Development, Shanghai, China, October 1995

Asia-Pacific Inter-organizational Task Force on Disability-related Concerns (12th meeting), Bangkok, October 1995

Training Workshop on Selected Population Topics and Information Technology for Information Professionals, Beijing, October-November 1995

AGRIMACH '95 Agricultural Machinery Exhibition and Symposium, Nakorn Ratchasima, Thailand, November 1995

Technical Advisory Committee Meeting of the Regional Network for Agricultural Machinery, Nakorn Ratchasima, Thailand, November 1995

Policy Seminar on Migration and Development, Bangkok, November 1995

Governing Body of the Regional Network for Agricultural Machinery, Nakorn Ratchasima, Thailand, November 1995

NGO Training Workshop on Promoting Advocacy and the Implementation of the Jakarta Declaration, Lamjung, Nepal, November 1995

Workshop on Pilot Projects to Promote Non-handicapping Environments, Yokohama, Japan, November 1995

Expert Group Meeting on the Enhancement of Social Security for the Poor in the ESCAP Region, Bangkok, November 1995

Inter-organizational Sub-committee on Population and Development in Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, November 1995

Technical Advisory Committee of the Regional Coordination Centre for Research and Development of Coarse Grains, Pulses, Roots and Tuber Crops in the Humid Tropics of Asia and the Pacific (thirteenth session), Bogor, Indonesia, November 1995

South Asia POPIN Technical Workshop on Population Information Repackaging, Colombo, November-December 1995

Governing Board of the Regional Coordination Centre for Research and Development of Coarse Grains, Pulses, Roots and Tuber Crops in the Humid Tropics of Asia and the Pacific (fourteenth session), Bogor, Indonesia, December 1995

Subregional Workshop on a Women's Information Network in the Central Asian Republics, Tashkent, December 1995

Regional Expert Group Meeting on the Effects of Price Liberalization and Market Reforms on Rural Poverty, Bangkok, December 1995

Workshop on Community-based Low-income Housing in the Rawalpindi-Islamabad Metropolitan Area, Islamabad, December 1995

Regional Seminar on Population Ageing and Development, Bangkok, December 1995

Expert Group Meeting on Promoting Women's Participation in Decision-making, Bangkok, December 1995

Transport and communications

Working Group on the Greater Mekong Subregion Tourism Sector, Bangkok (1st meeting), April 1995; (2nd meeting), December 1995

Workshop on Multimodal Transport, Kathmandu, May 1995

Expert Group Meeting on Commercialization and Private Sector Participation in Ports, Related Activities, Dredging and Inland Waterways, Bangkok, May 1995

Meeting to Establish an Asia Infrastructure Development Alliance, Bangkok, May 1995

Workshop on Integrated Tourism Planning in Pacific Island Countries, Port Vila, June 1995

ESCAP/IMO Seminar on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic, Guangzhou, China, June 1995

Expert Group Meeting on Inland Water Transport Information Systems and Training, Bangkok, June 1995

ESCAP/IMO Subregional Seminar on Facilitation of Maritime Traffic, Port Moresby and Suva, August 1995

ESCAP/UNCTAD Workshop on Multimodal Transport, Suva, September 1995

Steering Committee to Establish an Asia Infrastructure Development Alliance, New Delhi, September 1995

Regional Seminar-cum-Study Tour on Development and Improvement of Inland Water Transport in China, Nanjing, Yangzhou and Wuxi, China, September 1995

Seminar-cum-Study Tour on Management of Maintenance of Locomotives and Rolling Stock, Changzhou, China, September 1995

Country-level Training Course on Commercial Aspects of Inland Water Transport Development, Hanoi, September 1995

Policy-level Meeting on the Feasibility of Connecting Rail Networks of China, Mongolia, Kazakstan, the Russian Federation and the Korean Peninsula, Bangkok, October 1995

Meeting of the Chief Executives of National Freight Forwarders' Associations, Bangkok, October 1995

ESCAP/UNCTAD/Baltic and International Maritime Council (BIMCO) Regional Seminar on Charter Parties and Ship Finance, Bangkok, October-November 1995

Expert Group Meeting on the Development of a Highway Network in Asian Republics, Bangkok, October-November 1995

Inter-agency Steering Committee on Phase II (1992-1996) of the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific (4th meeting), Bangkok, November 1995

Expert Group Meeting on Environmental Impact Assessment for Inland Water Transport Development Projects in the Upper Mekong Subregion, Bangkok, November 1995

Country-level Workshop on the Conclusion of the Freight Forwarding Corridor Study, Phnom Penh, November 1995; Vientiane, December 1995

Ad Hoc Expert Group Meeting on Trans-Asian Railway Route Requirements in the Southern Corridor, Bangkok, December 1995

Regional Review Seminar on the Promotion of Multimodal Transport in South-East Asia, Bangkok, December 1995

Statistics

Workshop on the Review of the 1993 International Comparison Programme Data, Bangkok, October 1995

Seminar on Statistics on Trade in Services, Bangkok, November 1995

Expert Group Meeting to Review Computerization Development in the Public Sector, Bangkok, December 1995

Least developed, landlocked and island developing countries

Senior Officials/Experts Meeting on the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s, Bangkok, April 1995

PortCAM Computer Operators Training Course on the Upgrading of the Small Ship Management/Operations between Island Developing Countries: Cook Islands, June 1995; Samoa, July 1995; Federated States of Micronesia, September 1995

ESCAP/Bhutan Development Finance Corporation (BDFC) National Workshop on Strengthening Rural Credit and Finance in Bhutan, Thimphu, December 1995

C. List of advisory services

Regional economic cooperation

(a) Bangladesh, on major trends in macroeconomic policy developments in the region and the nature of activities implemented by ESCAP;

(b) China, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, on the implementation of the Regional Investment Information and Promotion Service;

(c) China, India, Philippines, Republic of Korea and Thailand, on the status of implementation of ISO 9000 quality management systems in the ESCAP region;

(d) Indonesia, on (i) review of the role of the Asian and Pacific Coconut Community, and assistance in developing a long- and medium-term programme of new activities for the Community in developing the coconut industry; and (ii) terms of reference of a study on promotion of trade and investment flows between the Economic Cooperation Organization and the Association of South East Asian Nations;

(e) Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan, to brief the concerned agencies on the benefits to be derived from regional economic cooperation, to identify opportunities for such cooperation, and to introduce the role of ESCAP in such promotion;

(f) Myanmar, on macroeconomic modelling and policy analysis;

(g) Nepal, on policy measures necessary to promote small and medium-sized enterprises;

(h) Sri Lanka, on investment promotion;

(i) Thailand, to assist in preparations for the Sixth Asia-Pacific International Trade Fair (ASPAT'96);

(j) Viet Nam, on the implementation of the project on advisory assistance to industry for export promotion.

Environment and sustainable development

(a) Islamic Republic of Iran, on natural gas activities;

(b) Samoa, on institutional issues in connection with geographic information systems development and applications.

Poverty alleviation through economic growth and social development

(a) Bhutan, on formulation of national macroeconomic policies for poverty alleviation;

(b) Cambodia, to assist in identifying the needs of youth and in the preparation of a national master plan for youth;

(c) China and India, on the promotion of non-handicapping environments;

(d) Fiji, to Fiji Prisons Service, on prisoners' education and classification;

(e) Fiji and Samoa, on the implementation of the Bali Declaration on Population and Sustainable Development;

(f) India: (i) on the implementation of the Agenda for Action for the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002; and (ii) to assist voluntary organizations in south India in the implementation of the Agenda for Action on Social Development in the ESCAP Region, with specific reference to the disabled;

(g) Japan and Vanuatu, concerning the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners;

(h) Singapore, in connection with the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons;

(i) Thailand: (i) to the Department of Corrections, Ministry of the Interior, concerning measures to deal with contemporary issues in correctional management; (ii) to the Asia Crime Prevention Foundation, on preparation of a programme of fostering community volunteer leaders for the prevention of crime and treatment of offenders; and (iii) on the establishment of a new juvenile vocational training school;

(j) Viet Nam: (i) to conduct training on information repackaging; (ii) to the National Committee of Population Activities and Family Planning/Centre for Population Studies and Information, on installation of CDS-ISIS software; (iii) to assist in formulating a project on internal migration for submission to UNDP for funding; and (iv) on the development of self-help organizations of people with diverse disabilities.

Transport and communications

Kyrgyzstan, on road taxation systems.

Statistics

(a) Islamic Republic of Iran, on organizational and institutional issues affecting national statistical services;

(b) Thailand, on statistical database development and downsizing systems;

(c) Tonga, to assist in the project formulation mission for the 1996 population census;

(d) Viet Nam, (i) to advise on the collection and compilation of industrial statistics; (ii) to assist the Statistical Office in further processing of multiround surveys; and (iii) to lecture at the Training Course on Population Topics, and Advanced Training Course on Demographic Data Analysis.

Least developed and landlocked developing countries

Myanmar, on strengthening economic cooperation with other developing countries.

Pacific island developing countries

(a) Solomon Islands, on the evaluation of a survey on informal financial systems conducted by the Central Bank;

(b) Tonga, to explore the possibility of an informal financial system throughout the island countries.

Chapter III

FIFTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE COMMISSION

A. Attendance and organization of work

7. The fifty-second session of the Commission was held at the United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok, from 17 to 24 April 1996.

8. The session was attended by representatives of the following members and associate members: Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Fiji, France, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Kazakstan, Kiribati, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Thailand, Tonga, Tuvalu, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Viet Nam, Guam, Hong Kong, Macau, New Caledonia, Northern Mariana Islands and Palau.

9. By virtue of rule 3 of the Commission's rules of procedure, representatives of Austria, Chile, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Morocco, Peru, Romania, South Africa and Turkey attended. A representative of Switzerland attended under Economic and Social Council resolution 860 (XXXII). A representative of the Holy See attended under Economic and Social Council decision 244 (LXIII).

10. The session was attended by an official of the United Nations Secretariat representing the Economic Commission for Europe.

11. Representatives of the following United Nations bodies attended: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Development Programme, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations International Drug Control Programme, United Nations Population Fund, and a representative of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS.

12. Representatives of the following specialized agencies were present in a consultative capacity: International Labour Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, International Civil Aviation Organization, World Health Organization, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Universal Postal Union, International Telecommunication Union, International Maritime Organization and United Nations Industrial Development Organization.

13. The following intergovernmental organizations attended as observers: Asian Clearing Union, Asian Development Bank, Asia and Pacific Coconut Community, Asian and Pacific Development Centre, Asian Productivity Organization, Asia-Pacific Telecommunity, Asian Reinsurance Corporation, Centre for Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific, Colombo Plan Bureau, Commonwealth of Independent States, Coordinating Committee for Coastal and Offshore Geoscience Programmes in East and Southeast Asia, European Commission, Forum Secretariat, International Organization for Migration, International Pepper Community, Mekong River Commission, South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and Typhoon Committee.

14. Observers were present from the following non-governmental organizations in category I: International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, International Cooperative Alliance, International Council on Social Welfare, International Organization for Standardization, International Planned Parenthood Federation, Society for International Development, World Federation of United Nations Associations, World Veterans Federation and Zonta International; and from the following organizations in category II: Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization, Baha'i International Community, International Federation of Non-Governmental Organizations for the Prevention of Drug and Substance Abuse, International Road Federation, Medical Women's International Association, Pan-Pacific and South East Asia Women's Association and World Conference on Religion and Peace; and from the following organization on the roster: International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations. Representatives of the Asia and Pacific Association for Social Work Education and the Association of Development Financing Institutions in Asia and the Pacific also attended the session.

15. The list of participants is given in document ESCAP(LII)/INF.1/Rev.2.

16. In accordance with rule 13 of its rules of procedure, the Commission elected HE Ms Lina B. Laigo (Philippines) Chairperson.

17. Following its past practice, the Commission decided to elect the following heads of delegations Vice-Chairpersons: HE Mr Hajatul-Aslam Wal Muslimin Said Muhammad Ali Jawid (Afghanistan), Hon. Alexander Downer (Australia), HE Dato Ahmad Wally Skinner (Brunei Darussalam), Mr Ou Orhart (Cambodia), HE Mr Li Zhaoxing (China), HE Mr Soemadi D.M. Brotodiningrat (Indonesia), HE Mr Mahmud Asgari Azad (Islamic Republic of Iran), HE Mr Hajime Ogawa (Japan), HE Mr Soubanh Srithirath (Lao People's Democratic Republic), Hon. Datuk Chong Kah Kiat (Malaysia), Hon. Lomej McKay (Marshall Islands), Hon. Prithvi Raj Ligal (Nepal), HE Mr Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi (Pakistan), Hon. Andres Uhérbelau (Palau), Hon. David Mai (Papua New Guinea), HE Mr Lee Ki-Choo (Republic of Korea), HE Mr V.S. Sidorov (Russian Federation), HE Mr Yatiman Yusof (Singapore), Hon. S.B. Dissanayake (Sri Lanka), HE Mr Makhmuodov Isroil (Tajikistan), HE M.R. Kasem S. Kasemsri (Thailand), Hon. Tutoatasi Fakafanua (Tonga), Hon. Amos Bangbiti (Vanuatu) and HE Mr Nguyen Dinh Bin (Viet Nam).

18. The Senior Officials' Segment of the session met in three Committees of the Whole to consider agenda items 1-4 and 6-12. Committee of the Whole I elected Mr Mohd. Roze Abdul Rahman (Malaysia) Chairperson and Mr A.N. Borodavkin (Russian Federation) and Mr Johnson Wabaiat (Vanuatu) Vice-Chairpersons. Committee of the Whole II elected HE Mr Chung Tae-Dong (Republic of Korea) Chairperson and Mr R.M.K. Ratnayake (Sri Lanka) and Mr Sayed Mohsen Esperi (Islamic Republic of Iran) Vice-Chairpersons. Committee of the Whole III elected HE Mr Sher Afgan Khan (Pakistan) Chairperson and Ms Aline Ménager-Kuster (France) and Mr Lu Yongshou (China) Vice-Chairpersons.

19. The Commission also constituted a Working Group on Draft Resolutions under the chairmanship of Mr Michiel W.H. Crom (Netherlands) to consider draft resolutions presented during the session. Mr V.S. Seshadri (India) and Mr Yoshiharu Kagawa (Japan) were elected Vice-Chairpersons of the Working Group.

20. The Chairperson announced that, in accordance with rule 12 of the rules of procedure, she and the Vice-Chairpersons, constituting the Credentials Committee, had examined the credentials of all the representatives and had found them to be in order.

B. Agenda

21. The Commission adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda (E/ESCAP/L.130/Rev.1, E/ESCAP/L.131).
4. Membership of the Commission (E/ESCAP/1043).
5. Policy issues for the ESCAP region:
   (a) Implications of recent economic and social developments (E/ESCAP/1015);
   (b) Rural poverty alleviation and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/1016 and Corr.1 and 2).
6. Emerging issues and developments and the Commission's programme of work:
   (a) Regional economic cooperation (E/ESCAP/1017, E/ESCAP/1018 and Add. 1 and Add.1/Corr.1, E/ESCAP/1019);
   (b) Environment and sustainable development (E/ESCAP/1020, E/ESCAP/1021, E/ESCAP/1022);
   (c) Poverty alleviation through economic growth and social development (E/ESCAP/1023, E/ESCAP/1024, E/ESCAP/1025);
   (d) Transport and communications (E/ESCAP/1026, E/ESCAP/1027);
   (e) Statistics (E/ESCAP/1028, E/ESCAP/1029);
   (f) Least developed, landlocked and island developing countries (E/ESCAP/1030).
7. Programme planning:
   (a) Medium-term plan, 1998-2001 (E/ESCAP/1031);
   (b) Implementation of the programme of work, 1994-1995 (E/ESCAP/1032 and Corr.1);
   (c) Proposed programme changes, 1996-1997 (E/ESCAP/1033 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1);
   (d) Calendar of meetings, April 1996-March 1997 (E/ESCAP/1034 and Add.1).
8. Technical cooperation activities of ESCAP and announcement of intended contributions (E/ESCAP/1035).
9. Strengthening inter-organizational cooperation in the promotion of economic and social development in the region (E/ESCAP/1036).
10. Reports of regional intergovernmental bodies (E/ESCAP/1037, E/ESCAP/1038, E/ESCAP/1039, E/ESCAP/1040).

11. Activities of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission (E/ESCAP/1041 and Add.1).

12. Date, venue and any other subject pertaining to the fifty-third session of the Commission (E/ESCAP/1042).

13. Other matters.

14. Adoption of the report of the Commission.

C. Account of proceedings

22. The session was declared open by the Acting Chairperson of the fifty-first session, HE Dato Ahmad Wally Skinner, Deputy Minister of Finance, Brunei Darussalam. HE Mr Banharn Silpa-Archa, Prime Minister of Thailand, delivered the inaugural address. The Executive Secretary of ESCAP read out a message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations and delivered an address.

Inaugural address by the Prime Minister of Thailand

23. The Prime Minister of Thailand, speaking on behalf of the Government and people of Thailand, extended a warm welcome to all those attending the session.

24. He recalled that, when he had addressed the General Assembly on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations in 1995, he had mentioned two most valuable contributions of the United Nations to the Asian and Pacific region: its role in the Cambodia peace process and the role of ESCAP in fostering a better quality of life for the people of the region. Indeed, ESCAP had over the years helped the region to fulfil its basic needs and had provided guidance to member countries in their quest for development.

25. He noted that the Asian and Pacific region, representing some 60 per cent of the world's population, was setting new records in economic growth and performance. Over the past decade, bilateral and multilateral trade and economic cooperation had expanded tremendously; that expansion was expected to continue well into the next century.

26. Despite such success, great disparities remained in the levels of economic development of the countries of the region. Poverty was still a key issue that needed to be tackled at both the domestic and the international levels. The theme topic of the current session of the Commission, "Rural poverty alleviation and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific", was highly relevant to the various global plans of action set forth by the United Nations, particularly by the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen in 1995. Complex social development issues remained high on the agenda of the developing countries.

27. Thailand's experience might be taken as a case in point. For three decades, the country had sustained high levels of economic growth, leading to a strong and stable financial and economic situation. That success had enabled the Government to help to alleviate poverty and improve, to a certain extent, the quality of life of its people. Development, however, had also produced as unintended consequences numerous social and environmental problems, including a widening gap in income distribution, depletion of natural resources and deterioration of the environment, as well as youth and social problems.

28. The Eighth National Economic and Social Development Plan of Thailand (1997-2001) was aimed at solving those problems by emphasizing human resources development, education and training, and by taking into consideration the cost of economic development in terms of natural resources and the environment. Successive Governments had attempted to tackle the complicated tasks of alleviating poverty and preserving the environment. Over the decades, His Majesty the King had made immeasurable contributions to national development and the welfare of the Thai people through the Royal Development Projects.

29. He noted that ESCAP had contributed greatly to the planning of the region's economic and social development. The Government of Thailand had therefore always attached importance to the Commission's work and stood ready to support its activities for the mutual benefit of the people of Asia and the Pacific. It recognized that the fiscal situation of ESCAP had steadily declined, while at the same time demands for assistance from developing countries had been rising. Thailand was cooperating with other members in providing economic and technical cooperation to nearby developing countries to enhance their development and existing economic complementarities. Thailand had also been working with international organizations and other countries to support regional projects that benefited its neighbours and promoted regional cooperation, such as the development of the Mekong basin and the connection of South-East Asia's land transport routes.

30. In closing, he expressed the hope that the session would generate new ideas to help guide national policies and facilitate cooperation among the members and associate members of ESCAP in their endeavours to alleviate rural poverty and to achieve sustainable development.

Statement by the Executive Secretary of ESCAP

31. The Executive Secretary extended a warm welcome to all those attending the session. He expressed gratitude to the Prime Minister of Thailand for inaugurating the session, thus reaffirming his

country's dedication to the aims and ideals of the Charter of the United Nations and its support of the Commission's commitment to the enhancement of economic and social development causes in the region.

32. He noted that the session was taking place at a time when the United Nations was experiencing a grave financial crisis. Member States were clamouring for change, streamlining and downsizing, and for a reconsideration of the objectives of the United Nations and the manner in which it worked.

33. As ESCAP prepared to mark, in 1997, the fiftieth anniversary of its founding, it had begun a review of the conference structure of the Commission, as well as its secretariat and the structure of its programme of work. The goal of a leaner and more efficient secretariat could be achieved only through the joint efforts of the secretariat and the membership, which must provide guidance and direction on how the secretariat could best assist the States that it was created to serve in achieving their economic and social aspirations.

Message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations

34. In his message, the Secretary-General noted that the United Nations had been assisting the developing countries in Asia and the Pacific for the past five decades in addressing pressing economic and social problems. The United Nations had been active in such diverse fields as the eradication of hunger and disease, the development of physical infrastructure, the strengthening of statistical capabilities, the protection of the environment with a view to accelerating economic growth, and the enhancement of the prospects for regional economic cooperation. Delegations would have an opportunity to deliberate further on those important issues at the current session of the Commission.

35. He further noted that the Asian and Pacific region was placed squarely at the forefront of world economic growth. Yet, given the diversity in the development experience within the region, the challenges ahead were many. He expressed the hope that the work at the current session would reinforce the spirit of partnership and the traditional vitality that had become the distinguishing features of the Commission.

Membership of the Commission

36. The Commission had before it document E/ESCAP/1043.

37. The Commission endorsed the proposal that the name of Hong Kong be changed to "Hong Kong, China", effective 1 July 1997. It endorsed the proposal that the status of Palau should be changed from associate member to member of the Commission. It endorsed the application of Turkey to become a member of the Commission within its geographical scope.

38. The Commission approved three draft resolutions for submission to the Economic and Social Council relating to the amendment of the following paragraphs of its terms of reference:

> Paragraphs 2 and 4, in respect of the change of the name of Hong Kong, to Hong Kong, China;
>
> Paragraphs 3 and 4, in respect of the change of status of Palau;
>
> Paragraphs 2 and 3, in respect of the admission of Turkey as a member of the Commission.

Policy issues for the ESCAP region

Policy statement of the Executive Secretary

39. The Executive Secretary, while taking note of the continued economic dynamism of the region with its high average rates of economic growth reaching close to 8 per cent in 1995, pointed out that the resulting prosperity had not been shared by all the countries and peoples of the region. Poverty still affected hundreds of millions of people throughout the region. He identified the basic causes of poverty in the lack of opportunities for employment and access to resources as well as the inability of the poor to respond to new and emerging opportunities. He emphasized the need to encourage complementarity among countries so that progress could be equitably shared by all.

40. Political will was necessary at all levels to deal with the problem. He drew the attention of the Commission to the secretariat's initiative to reassess its programmes and activities with a view to delivering its services as effectively as possible to members and associate members in the face of diminishing resources. He requested the Commission's guidance and advice in achieving a leaner and yet more efficient organization.

41. He emphasized the need for the continued assistance of the United Nations to the developing countries in overcoming problems associated with their economic reform, liberalization and closer integration with the global economy. Such help was particularly needed by the poorest countries in order to avoid their further marginalization; even the more successful developing countries faced the risk of externally generated instability, especially through the global financial and capital markets.

42. The Executive Secretary drew attention to the Commission's useful role as a forum for the sharing of experience, and to the help that the Commission had rendered over the past 50 years in such fields as transport and infrastructure development, building of technological capabilities, environmental protection and poverty alleviation. The Commission had acted as the region's voice in major global conferences and had followed up with regional action the recommendations of those conferences. He noted the Commission's

strong sense of vitality and purposefulness in providing support to members and associate members.

43. The Executive Secretary emphasized the need to consolidate regionwide the achievements in economic and social development that had spread unevenly among members and associate members and population groups. More vigorous efforts were required to overcome the gaps in social development through public-private sector collaboration, mobilization of the region's human, material and financial resources and their efficient use.

44. The Executive Secretary noted that the prospects for intraregional and interregional cooperation through trade, investment and financial transactions were more favourable than ever before. In that context, he again emphasized the need to enhance the Commission's role as a facilitator in the sharing of experience among countries at varying levels of development, as a centre for information, and as a link between action at the national level in various fields and the evolution of a global consensus in those fields, thus enhancing intraregional and interregional cooperation.

45. The Executive Secretary encouraged regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, and academic and policy research institutions, among others, to join the Commission in collective efforts to raise the living standards of the peoples inhabiting the Asian and Pacific community of nations.

Implications of recent economic and social developments

46. The Commission took note of the positive trends in the world economy, characterized by a strengthening of economic recovery in the industrialized countries and an acceleration in the growth of world output and trade since 1994. Those trends had resulted in a further expansion of the global markets and had a positive impact on the developing countries of the ESCAP region, which depended crucially on international trade for their growth and development.

47. Economic growth in the developing countries of the ESCAP region, averaging 7.8 per cent in 1995, much above the world average of 2.6 per cent, confirmed the strong trend of growth in the region over the past several years. It was noted, however, that growth performance was highly unequal among countries of the region, with rates of growth in the least developed and Pacific island economies remaining well below the regional average, and growth in the economies of the Central Asian republics, while improved, remaining persistently negative.

48. Domestic economic reforms in areas such as trade, investment, foreign exchange and import tariff regimes played an important part in enabling countries of the region to achieve average economic and trade growth rates well above the world average rates. Domestic reforms and liberalization also enabled the economies of the region to forge closer links with the increasingly globalized and multipolar world economy, opening up further opportunities for accelerated economic growth and development.

49. It was noted with concern, however, that the continuing liberalization and openness of trade regimes had also tended to cause the balance-of-payments situation to deteriorate in many countries of the region, as imports were rising faster than exports and exports were facing increasingly intense competition in the international market.

50. The management of the balance of payments in the new, open and deregulated trade, investment and financial environment thus posed new challenges to the developing countries of the region. Furthermore, there were many countries which were not adequately prepared to benefit from liberalization and globalization and thus ran the risk of being marginalized. The developing countries' efforts to integrate themselves into the liberalized global economy through structural reforms and adjustments sometimes also involved excessive social cost.

51. The Commission recommended that the secretariat should undertake analytical studies on the issues and complexities of managing the balance of payments in the new, open and deregulated trade, investment and financial environment.

52. It recognized the beneficial impact of the more open trading system that would emerge as a result of the agreements reached under the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations. Concern was felt, however, that the distribution of benefits might not be equitable, especially since the developing countries were to lose their differential treatment in trade. In addition, there was the possibility of regress through the introduction of extraneous conditions in the arena of trade. While the developing countries were still assessing the impact of the Uruguay Round agreements, particular concern was felt for the likely adverse impact on the region's least developed countries, the Pacific island economies and other weak economies, which would need to be redressed through expanded measures of financial and technical assistance.

53. In view of the concerns of the developing countries in the region, the Commission attached great importance to the forthcoming World Trade Organization (WTO) ministerial meeting, to be held in Singapore in December 1996, and urged members and associate members to take an active part in that Conference. The Commission strongly supported the secretariat's proposal to organize a meeting of senior officials of countries in the region preparatory to the ministerial meeting. It also accepted with appreciation the offer of the Government of Indonesia to host the meeting of senior officials. The Commission urged the secretariat to provide technical assistance to needy countries to enhance their capacity to comply with

obligations arising from WTO membership. Similar assistance should be given to countries which were not members of WTO to enable them to understand the implications of the implementation of the Uruguay Round agreements and to facilitate their accession to WTO. In that context, the secretariat was urged to undertake analytical studies and appropriate initiatives on the impacts of the accession to WTO for the oil- and gas-exporting countries of the ESCAP region.

54. The Commission recognized the importance of private capital flows, particularly foreign direct investment flows, as sources of investment financing, technology transfer and employment generation in the region. It was noted, however, that many countries in the region, including the least developed countries, even with their investment-friendly policy regimes, were unable to attract such investments. The recent decline in official development assistance (ODA) flows and the lack of progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s were viewed with concern. The Commission recommended that the secretariat analyse those issues to bring out fully the implications for the economic growth and development of the concerned countries and the need for further special measures in their favour.

55. The Commission took note of the increasing volume of portfolio investment in the region. Concern was, however, expressed about the volatility and unpredictability of such flows, which could have a destabilizing impact on domestic monetary situations and exchange rates. The potentially damaging effects of such volatile capital movements needed to be carefully watched and studied.

56. The Commission recognized the increasing role for the private sector in development and the importance of the development of small and medium-sized enterprises, which constituted the main form of business organization in the region. Those enterprises should be provided with opportunities for modernization, the acquisition of new technological capability, improved access to finance and the enhancement of their international competitiveness. While taking note of the efforts being made to provide a conducive environment for the private sector in many countries, the Commission stressed the need for wide-ranging support of policies and promotional measures to enable the private sector to cope with changing business environments and to seize new opportunities.

57. The Commission viewed with concern the many unintended consequences of rapid economic growth and development in the region. Those included a widening gap in income distribution, deterioration of the environment with severe urban and industrial water pollution, deforestation, and the degradation of land, mineral and marine resources. The Commission stressed the importance of proper management, protection and preservation of environmental resources to ensure the environmental sustainability of future development. In that context, the Polluter Pays Principle, which helped to internalize environmental costs in business operations, was recognized as a guiding principle of policy. It was recommended that, through educational and training activities, as well as greater information flow, more awareness should be created about the deteriorating environment and the importance of its proper management.

58. In the context of environmental degradation, one delegation stated that, owing to unilateral development and diversion of water in the upper riparian areas, some serious problems were being caused in the lower riparian areas, and that regional and bilateral efforts would be required to solve issues of water-sharing of rivers jointly owned by different countries of the region. Another delegation stated that there were many factors responsible for such problems, with inadequacy of water flows during the dry season forming the crux of the matter, and that the solution was to be found in equitable, long-term, comprehensive arrangements, including augmentation of flows from adjoining basins, to be arrived at through bilateral negotiations.

59. Growth had been accompanied by widespread imbalances between urban and rural areas, causing a large-scale migration of people from rural to urban areas as rural resources became scarcer and the rural environment deteriorated. The Commission emphasized the need for human resources development through educational and training activities to improve the productivity of the rural poor. It further recommended that development strategies should be adopted for integrating economic, social and environmental concerns into the development process. Decentralized decision-making, local and community participation, and the involvement of the private sector in local and community development should constitute essential elements of such strategies.

60. The Commission recognized the prevalence of widespread poverty in the region, despite fast growth and rising per capita income, as a major dimension of economic and social imbalance. It stressed that sustained economic growth, which could create job opportunities and enhance government revenues for the provision of social services, was a very important means of alleviating and eventually eradicating poverty. Growth alone, however, was not sufficient; high growth needed to be accompanied by an improvement in income distribution, and well-designed and targeted poverty alleviation programmes needed to be adopted.

61. The Commission recognized the expanding opportunities for regional cooperation in wide-ranging economic and social development fields. The emergence of various regional and subregional organizations was acting as a powerful mechanism for trade and investment liberalization and cooperation in

the region. The Commission reiterated the complementary role of ESCAP in those concerted moves towards greater regional cooperation in the Asian and Pacific region. It stressed the need for the effective implementation of ongoing programmes, such as the Delhi Declaration on Strengthening Regional Economic Cooperation in Asia and the Pacific towards the Twenty-first Century, in various relevant fields including trade, investment, infrastructure and tourism development.

62. The Commission recognized that the availability of adequate infrastructure in the areas of power, roads, ports, urban services and telecommunications was a crucial prerequisite for enhancing trade and attracting investment. In that respect, it was noted that the work being carried out by ESCAP on the Asian Highway and the Trans-Asian Railway under the Asian land transport infrastructure development (ALTID) project was making a valuable contribution to intraregional and interregional economic cooperation.

63. The Commission noted with satisfaction that the secretariat had identified the integration of the economies in transition into the regional flows of trade and investment as a priority area. It also noted with satisfaction that a number of countries, from both within and outside the region, had begun to strengthen their trade and investment ties with those economies. That would greatly help them to develop their industrial base and assist them in their economic recovery. It urged the secretariat to provide continued assistance in creating the necessary conditions for the rapid integration of the economies in transition with other developing economies in the region and beyond.

64. The Commission also took note of the severe disadvantages of the landlocked countries and the Pacific island economies and recommended that assistance to meet their special needs should be intensified.

65. Increasing cooperation, cohesiveness and economic dynamism were turning the Asian and Pacific region into a centre of world economic growth and a major commodity and investment market that attracted not only greater interregional trade and investment flows but also greater cooperation with other regions of the world. The success of the first Asia-Europe Meeting, held in Bangkok in March 1996, which had sought to strengthen economic exchange and cooperation among the Asian and European countries in economic, social and other fields, was an example of such a move towards enhanced interregional cooperation.

66. The Commission also noted the growing volume and intensity of technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) activities among countries of the region. The process had especially benefited the least developed and small island economies of the region in human resources development and institution-building in various fields. The Commission appreciated the offer of a number of developing countries of the region to provide technical assistance to other developing countries of the region. It stressed the desirability of expanding such cooperation wherever possible.

67. The Commission recognized that the peaceful settlement of disputes could save valuable resources for the provision of social services such as basic education, primary health care, population planning, and water supply and sanitation. Such services were essential not only for improved welfare but also for the proper development of the region's human resources. Additional resources for such services were required from both public and private sources. Mobilizing more revenue through tax reforms and rationalizing and resetting intersectoral expenditure priorities within the public sector could increase the availability of resources for expenditure on social services.

68. The Commission stressed its catalytic role and provision of support to various national development activities and its promotion of regional cooperation for development. However, further streamlining and more focusing of its activities were needed to improve its efficiency and effectiveness.

69. The Commission welcomed the secretariat's initiative in commencing a comprehensive review of the effectiveness of the thematic approach and priorities in relation to the ESCAP programme of work and the resources available to the programme, in preparation for the review by the Commission of its conference structure, as mandated by its resolution 48/2 of 23 April 1992. That review would be undertaken in the context of the ongoing reform efforts of the United Nations.

70. The Commission emphasized the importance of the active participation of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission (ACPR) in that exercise and recommended that a regional preparatory meeting should be convened in Bangkok prior to the fifty-third session of the Commission to review the conference structure of the Commission, including its thematic priorities and its subsidiary structure. In that connection, the Commission recommended that the programme of work of ESCAP should be prioritized and more focused, taking into account the financial situation of the United Nations. It also recommended that the secretariat's comparative advantage should be defined more clearly and its efficiency increased. It further recommended that inter-agency cooperation at the regional level should be strengthened.

71. The Commission noted the need to evaluate the impact of the ESCAP programme of work by subprogramme, to assess efficiency gains in programme support and to review the ESCAP publications programme. It also noted the need for congruence between the programmatic and organizational structures to enhance accountability and transparency. The Commission adopted resolution 52/1 on preparation for the review of the conference structure of the Commission.

72. It was suggested that, in making voluntary contributions, bilateral donors that were in a position to do so should allow the secretariat greater flexibility in determining its priority for funding projects, with a view to optimizing the use of extrabudgetary funds in a timely manner to supplement the reduced regular budget resources.

Rural poverty alleviation and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific

73. The Commission had before it documents E/ESCAP/1016 and Corr. 1 and 2, and ST/ESCAP/1617. It endorsed the findings and policy recommendations of those documents.

Agreed conclusions

74. The Commission concluded that Governments needed to adopt multi-pronged strategies to alleviate rural poverty. The key elements of such strategies were (a) the reallocation of resources from non-productive sectors to the social sectors; (b) the generation of high economic growth and equitable sharing of its benefits with the poor; (c) the promotion of access to nutrition, health, literacy, education and training; (d) the provision of physical infrastructure; (e) the provision of basic social services such as clean water and sanitation; and (f) special anti-poverty programmes for the most disadvantaged and needy groups.

75. The Commission recommended that the strategy of sustainable development should be pursued through environmentally friendly technological changes and improvements in the productivity of resources. That would contribute to the conservation of natural resources as well as the alleviation of rural poverty.

76. The Commission noted that specific policy interventions were needed to raise the socio-economic status of rural women. Recognizing that women were the principal victims of rural poverty, the Commission recommended that standards of living of rural women should be improved through the promotion of access to primary health care, family planning, nutrition, and education and microcredit schemes.

77. The Commission emphasized that while individual Governments had the primary responsibility for alleviating rural poverty, progress in that regard also required efforts at the regional and international levels. The major challenge facing the international community was how to translate commitment into concrete actions.

78. Given the gravity of the rural poverty situation in the region, the Commission recommended that the secretariat should formulate a regional strategy and a programme of action on rural poverty alleviation. The secretariat should conduct a thorough examination of the rural poverty situation and the obstacles that would have to be faced in implementing measures to alleviate rural poverty.

79. The Commission recommended that the secretariat should undertake a follow-up of the theme study with reference to a specific time-frame, which would define sustainability at different levels, so that various scenarios could be derived with internally consistent recommendations and clear policy options. There was also a need to take into account social and cultural aspects in examining issues related to rural poverty.

80. The Commission urged the secretariat to assist its members and associate members in strengthening their policies and programmes relating to rural poverty alleviation, through research studies, workshops and training programmes, the facilitation of information exchange, and the provision of technical assistance and advisory services.

Discussion of issues

81. The Commission noted that, as 1996 was the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, the selection of the theme topic on rural poverty alleviation for the current session was appropriate and timely.

82. It also noted the widening gap between the rich and the poor in the region. It was a cruel paradox that abject poverty coexisted side by side with affluence and wealth. Nearly four fifths of the poor lived in rural areas. The incidence of poverty was much higher in rural than in urban areas in most countries of the region. Moreover, rural poverty was aggravated by high population growth and natural resource degradation. Reference was made to population programmes as one of the essential components in national poverty alleviation strategies.

83. The Commission expressed concern over the phenomenon of growing rural-urban inequalities in income and access to social services such as clean water, sanitation, health facilities and education in the countries of the region.

84. It noted that rapid and sustainable economic and social progress could be achieved in the region by reallocating scarce resources from the non-productive defence sector to productive activities, thereby enabling the region to benefit from the peace dividend.

85. It also noted that high economic growth was a necessary but not a sufficient condition for alleviating rural poverty. Progress in alleviating rural poverty would only be possible with sustained and sustainable economic growth. The poverty-combating policies and programmes must therefore be incorporated in economic development strategies with well-defined objectives and time-frames, as well as specific and workable measures.

86. The Commission recognized that asset creation and income generation were more important than income transfers and subsidies in alleviating rural poverty.

87. The Commission noted that rural poverty alleviation programmes needed to be participatory in nature at both the formulation and the implementation phases. Governments must mobilize and encourage all social forces, including individuals, enterprises, grass-roots organizations and non-governmental organizations, to participate in the formulation and implementation of poverty alleviation programmes and activities.

88. Rural poverty was as much the result of social, political and economic factors as it was the result of inadequate food production and a lack of agricultural technology. While great strides had been made in agricultural productivity over the past decades, such progress was declining and new solutions needed to be explored. Innovative techniques needed to be developed for improving food production while preserving natural resources.

89. A new economic policy framework was being widely adopted across the region which was designed to give special impetus to agricultural growth and rural poverty alleviation by removing the inherent bias against agriculture that, for too long, had undermined the effectiveness of development strategies. The Commission acknowledged that labour-intensive agricultural growth within a liberalized economic policy framework and the promotion of human resources development would significantly alleviate rural poverty. It emphasized the need to remove constraints on agricultural growth by promoting better functioning of land markets, liberalizing agricultural trade and facilitating the marketing of agricultural products.

90. The Commission noted that, for alleviating rural poverty, policy initiatives were required to promote diversification in the agricultural product mix. Such initiatives would give increasing importance to value-added products for which the demand was favourable, such as dairy, livestock, horticultural and floricultural products.

91. It also noted the need to address the plight of poor rural fishing communities. Support for community-based fishery-resource management needed to be intensified to ensure the sustainability of fishery resources.

92. The Commission noted that the Agreement on Agriculture of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations would help to sustain the development momentum in the region. However, it was essential for the developing countries to examine carefully the impact of that Agreement on their economies in general, and in particular on the structure of their production and specialization in international trade of agricultural products in order to maximize benefits from the opening up of new opportunities.

93. The Commission noted that the gains arising from the trade liberalization of the Uruguay Round, particularly in resource-based sectors in which many countries of the region were engaged, could be eroded if compliance with environmental standards led to cost increases which could adversely affect the competitiveness of the exports of the countries concerned.

94. The Commission emphasized the importance of building institutional capacity, particularly of local government units, in the sustainable management of the environment and natural resources. There was a need to provide policy support for the vigorous enforcement of regulations against unfavourable practices to prevent degradation of the environment and natural resources.

95. The Commission recognized the need to promote a rural industrialization strategy to alleviate rural poverty, as the growth of the agricultural sector alone was not adequate. Particular mention was made of the need to enhance linkages between agricultural and non-farm activities.

96. The Commission acknowledged that the development of physical infrastructure was important for facilitating the growth of the rural sector in general and the agricultural sector in particular, which in turn would alleviate rural poverty. It emphasized the need to create the essential infrastructure in remote and resource-poor areas, as well as to provide the poorer sections of population with the basic facilities for education and health.

97. The Commission emphasized the significant contribution of rural women in the economies of the Asian and Pacific region. Agriculture remained the main source of livelihood for rural women, although non-farm activities were gaining in importance. It drew attention to the importance of credit support for the landless and assetless rural poor, particularly women. It recognized the need to devise strategies and policies for rural women so as to enable them to participate effectively in the growth process.

98. The Commission also noted the importance of developing international and domestic seaports and shipping services in the island countries; such services were integral components of the poverty alleviation process.

99. It expressed appreciation to the Government of the Netherlands for providing financial support for the preparation of the theme study.

Emerging issues and developments and the Commission's programme of work

Regional economic cooperation

100. The Commission had before it documents E/ESCAP/1017, E/ESCAP/1018 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1 and E/ESCAP/1019.

Report of the Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation on its fifth session

101. In endorsing the report of the Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation on its fifth session and

the recommendations therein, the Commission reiterated its commitment and support for strengthening the regional economic cooperation process, especially in the light of the major and profound changes that had taken place in the international economic situation. It expressed satisfaction that the Committee and its Steering Group had addressed a wide range of issues and achieved considerable progress in dealing with economic cooperation in important areas. The Committee was now performing its mandated function of being a mobilizer of ideas and a policy planner, while the Steering Group had evolved into a "think-tank". It commended the innovative approaches that had been adopted at the seventh and eighth meetings of the Steering Group in organizing panel discussions which permitted a useful exchange of views among a cross-section of representatives of government, academia and the private sector.

102. The Commission recalled the importance that it had accorded to subregional economic cooperation and commended the Steering Group and the Committee for its initiatives to stimulate such cooperation, specifically with regard to North-East Asia. It noted the recommendation of the Committee that a review of cooperation in North-East Asia should be undertaken in 1998. The proposals for the establishment of a North-East Asian business forum and enhanced cooperation through TCDC, including tripartite cooperation, were noted with interest. It was emphasized that such useful work should be continued, and it was recommended that similar exercises should be undertaken for other subregions to promote intra-subregional cooperation and inter-subregional linkages. The Commission noted the request by the delegation of the Russian Federation for greater emphasis on the integration of its far eastern part with the North-East Asian subregion. It recognized that the work done by the Tumen River Area Development Programme in North-East Asia would complement the secretariat's efforts. It also noted the request that subregional cooperation should extend to natural resources management in the subregion.

103. The Commission stressed the importance of reinforcing TCDC in the areas of human resources development and the exchange and sharing of experience. It welcomed the efforts of the secretariat to expand economic and technical cooperation among developing countries (ECDC-TCDC) activities in the context of regional economic cooperation; it highlighted the useful role of tripartite forms of cooperation.

104. The Commission approved the endorsement by the Committee of the secretariat's proposal to organize, in collaboration with WTO, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), a meeting among senior trade policy officials of the region to help in their preparation for the first WTO ministerial meeting, to be held in Singapore in December 1996. The Commission welcomed the offer made by the Government of Indonesia to host the meeting of senior trade policy officials in Jakarta sometime in early September 1996.

105. The Commission endorsed the additions made to the Seoul Plan of Action for Promoting Industrial Restructuring in Asia and the Pacific, as annexed to document E/ESCAP/1017. It considered the Regional Forum for Sustainable Industrial Development and Restructuring an effective means for facilitating an ongoing dialogue between policy makers, private sector representatives and professional experts in promoting industrial restructuring in the region. It urged that activities related to industrial and technological development should be strengthened and focused on areas such as small and medium-scale enterprise development, investment promotion, industrial complementarities and relocation, technological capability-building, skills development and private sector development.

106. The Commission noted with satisfaction the secretariat's initiative to hold a meeting of ministers of industry and technology in 1997. In undertaking the preparatory work for that event, the secretariat should keep in view the needs and priorities of least developed and other disadvantaged countries.

107. The Commission emphasized the need for the further strengthening of regional cooperation in promoting science and technology for sustainable development. It noted the progress made in the implementation of the Action Programme for Regional Economic Cooperation in Investment-related Technology Transfer, particularly the commencement of the two studies on technology flows and the associated technological capability-building, and the review of national policies for the promotion of technology transfer. The findings of the studies should be disseminated as widely as possible. The Commission pointed to the need for a continuous search for new areas on which the Action Programme could focus, such as information technology. It recommended that the activities related to technological development and promotion should be given priority.

108. Delegations of the least developed countries, while renewing their commitment to regional economic cooperation, requested that special attention be paid to the secretariat's activities to integrate their economies through economic cooperation into the more dynamic growth processes of Asia and the Pacific. A suggestion was made that a five-year strategic plan should be developed to promote North-South and South-South cooperation.

109. Recognizing the diversity in the levels of development at national and subregional levels, as well as the particular needs and problems of landlocked and transit countries, the Commission stressed the importance of adequate infrastructure, particularly

transport and communications facilities to promote international trade, tourism and regional economic cooperation.

110. The Commission recognized the importance of the ALTID project in strengthening economic cooperation in North-East Asia. It noted that, in order to facilitate inter-subregional trade, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in close cooperation with the Government of Turkmenistan, had initiated trilateral arrangements to provide transit facilities for goods originating from the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) or the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries to the Central Asian countries, or vice versa, through the Mashhad-Sarakhs rail link; such an arrangement not only provided the landlocked countries of Central Asia with access to the Persian Gulf, but also connected China to Europe via a new "silk rail route". Agreements had already been reached with some countries which were members of the two subregional organizations, and negotiations to provide similar arrangements for other interested countries were under way.

111. The Commission took note of the physical infrastructure facilities being developed in North-East Asia, including those under the Tumen River Area Development Programme. Such facilities provided a basis for strengthening economic cooperation in the subregion. It was noted, however, that the Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation and its Steering Group should consider issues relating to infrastructure, such as the ALTID project, from the perspective of strengthening regional economic cooperation in order to avoid duplication in the consideration of such issues by other forums of ESCAP.

112. Some delegations suggested that priority should be accorded to the expeditious implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Committee. The importance of the joint ESCAP/Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Seminar on Electronic Data Interchange, and the offer by Thailand to host the Seminar on ISO 9000 and 14000 were noted with appreciation.

113. The Commission endorsed the report of ACPR on improving the effectiveness in the functioning of the Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation and its Steering Group. It observed that implementation of the recommendations contained in the report would enhance the effectiveness of both the Committee and its Steering Group in strengthening regional economic cooperation.

114. The Commission expressed gratitude to the Governments of Mongolia and the Republic of Korea for hosting, respectively, the seventh and eighth meetings of the Steering Group, as well as for the excellent arrangements for the organization of the meetings. The generous financial contributions of the Governments of France, Japan and the Netherlands for the organization of the seventh meeting, and of the Government of the Republic of Korea for the eighth meeting, were appreciated. The Commission also welcomed the generous offer of the Government of Japan to host the ninth meeting of the Steering Group in Chitose City in February 1997.

Emerging issues and developments relevant to the subprogramme

115. The Commission stressed the need to strengthen economic cooperation in order to address the emerging issues of concern in the region. There was consensus that the full and effective implementation of the Uruguay Round agreements was fundamental to the credibility of the multilateral trading system. Some delegations expressed concern regarding the emergence of non-tariff barriers, wider use of anti-dumping action, the imposition of environmental considerations on trade issues, attempts to link environmental regulations and social issues to trade, and the resort to unilateral action by some countries, all of which militated against the establishment of the rule-based and open multilateral trading system envisaged under WTO.

116. To meet the new challenges, it was recommended that ESCAP should continue to provide technical assistance for the implementation of the Uruguay Round agreements and for future negotiations, especially in the area of trade in services. The importance of integrating the textiles and clothing sector into the multilateral trading system was underscored by some delegations. The Commission recognized the importance of the textiles and clothing manufacturing sector for the future economic growth of the least developed countries; it suggested that the implications of the Uruguay Round agreements for the least developed countries should be studied. A suggestion was made that the developing countries of Asia and the Pacific should participate actively in the WTO Committee on Trade and Environment to ensure a more balanced outcome of the deliberations. In that context, appreciation was expressed for the secretariat's activities in organizing the regional study on trade and environment linkages and the workshop on eco-labelling. It was suggested that a study should be undertaken on the impact of the erosion of preferences for the region's least developed countries.

117. The Commission recommended that ESCAP should also continue to provide technical assistance to non-WTO members in their integration into the international trading system, including their accession to WTO. To ensure that duplication of effort did not occur in providing such assistance, the secretariat was asked to collaborate with other concerned organizations such as WTO and UNCTAD. The Commission underscored the need to enhance the competitiveness of the developing countries and noted the importance of adopting trade efficiency measures. The secretariat's efforts in developing training modules for the

introduction of electronic data interchange in collaboration with ECE and UNCTAD were appreciated.

118. The Commission recognized the important role of foreign direct investment in promoting economic integration in the region. It also noted that developing countries should not be excessively dependent on foreign direct investment flows but must also mobilize investments from domestic resources. Some delegations expressed their opposition to any attempts to include investment in the WTO agenda and emphasized the need for developing countries to maintain some degree of flexibility in their policies. The secretariat was requested to undertake a study on the linkages between investment and competition policy.

119. The Commission noted the statement made by one delegation correcting the reference in document E/ESCAP/1018 to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in which it was explained that the OECD Codes of Liberalization were legally binding; that the agreement referred to should be identified specifically as the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI); and that MAI would be open to non-OECD members.

120. The Commission recognized the positive as well as the destabilizing effects of financial liberalization in the developing countries in the region. It supported an in-depth analysis by the secretariat of country experience in those issues, as instability in financial markets could threaten the economic progress of many developing countries and hinder their integration into the global economy. In addition to macroeconomic aspects of instability in financial markets, the impact at the micro level on the banking and financial institutions would also be included in the study. The Commission also recommended that high priority should be accorded to the problems faced by the least developed countries in financial reform, and suggested that technical cooperation and training activities should be organized for them involving the development of human resources, technology and management skills through the utilization of the ECDC-TCDC modality.

121. The Commission noted that relocative foreign direct investment and dispersal of industries might strongly contribute to economic development by bringing a package of capital, technology and access to the international market. The importance of the national policy framework, the level of endogenous technological capability and the availability of qualified human resources for attracting, adopting and benefiting from foreign technology would become evident. Special attention should be given to the least developed, landlocked and island developing countries and economies in transition to accelerate the process of creating or strengthening their technological capability and to facilitate their participation in the mainstream of economic activity in the region. A view was expressed that intellectual property rights generally facilitated the flows and diffusion of technology. It was pointed out, however, that in certain cases, intellectual property rights might constrain such flows. The Commission also noted the offer of Thailand to share experience in privatization and public sector reform with other developing and least developed countries.

122. The Commission recommended that activities should be organized, in cooperation with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and related organizations, to evolve suitable mechanisms to assist small and medium-sized industries. It also emphasized the need to undertake activities related to financing technology acquisition and absorption, and to evaluate the impact of intraregional technology and capital flows being promoted by regional transnational corporations.

123. The Commission noted the various cooperative arrangements between ESCAP and other United Nations specialized agencies and bodies, especially with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in the area of industrial and technological development. Such cooperation should be continued and further strengthened.

124. The Commission took cognizance of progress in the implementation of the Delhi Declaration on Strengthening Regional Economic Cooperation in Asia and the Pacific towards the Twenty-first Century. It recommended that the secretariat should continue its efforts to pursue the activities recommended therein.

125. The Commission adopted resolutions 52/10 on the revised Action Programme for Regional Economic Cooperation in Trade and Investment, and 52/11 on the strengthening of subregional economic cooperation among the south-western member countries of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, including the member countries of the Economic Cooperation Organization.

126. The Commission took note of the statements made by the representatives of UNIDO, the Asian Clearing Union and SAARC.

Report on the Regional Network for Agricultural Machinery

127. The Commission endorsed the report of the Governing Body of the Regional Network for Agricultural Machinery (RNAM) and emphasized that it should continue its activities until the end of 1998, as recommended in the report. The Commission took note of the activities of RNAM on enhancing employment opportunities for rural women, and on the promotion and development of agro-related metalworking industries in the least developed and island developing countries of Asia and the Pacific. The Commission gratefully acknowledged the generous contributions to RNAM of the Government of Japan and UNIDO, and the cash contributions of the participating countries.

Report on the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology

128. The Commission endorsed the report and recommendations of the Governing Board of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology (APCTT) on its tenth session. It expressed appreciation for the activities and progress made by the Centre in promoting technology transfer, utilization and management. It recognized the Centre's pragmatic range of programmes of immediate relevance to the region and its core competence as a link between suppliers and seekers of technologies in the Asian and Pacific region.

129. The Commission expressed satisfaction at the proactive initiatives taken by APCTT to strengthen linkages among enterprises, research and development institutions, consultants, and technology transfer agencies, with its particular emphasis on sustainable development, through workshops, exhibitions and training programmes. Those services included technology information services, the search for partners worldwide, finance syndication for environmentally sound technologies projects, consultancy subcontracts and marketing assistance, in addition to participation in technology transfer events organized by APCTT. The Commission commended the Centre's assistance to member States in their efforts to strengthen national capacities for endogenous technological development, including technology management systems.

130. The Commission noted with satisfaction the technological support services provided to small and medium-sized enterprises through the second phase of the project on the Mechanism for Exchange of Technology Information, as well as activities related to increasing the participation of women entrepreneurs in the industrial sector.

131. It observed the usefulness of the various promotion channels of APCTT, such as publication and on-line data bank services, which contributed to meeting the technology information and utilization requirements of the target groups. In particular, the *Asia Pacific Tech Monitor* and the Value Added Technology Information Service covered various technological areas of considerable relevance to the region. The Commission noted with satisfaction that China was supporting the translation of major publications of APCTT into Chinese to enhance their dissemination and acceptance in China.

132. The Commission was informed that the State Association Russian House for International Scientific and Technological Cooperation intended to make available its database on technologies through a satellite link to APCTT. It was further informed that the Government of India intended to provide an expert on a non-reimbursable loan basis to APCTT in the field of technology information. The Commission urged other countries and donors to provide experts on a fund-in-trust basis.

133. The Commission directed APCTT to continue to organize its programmes in close cooperation with national agencies and institutions, as well as international agencies, in order to derive as much benefit as possible from the synergistic pooling of activities, efforts and resources. The Centre was also requested to focus its programmes on meeting the particular needs and requirements of the least developed countries in the fields of technology development transfer, utilization and management.

134. In accordance with article 9 of the Statute of APCTT, the Commission elected to the Governing Board for the period 1996-1999 the host country, India, as well as the following countries: Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam.

135. The Commission gratefully acknowledged the substantial institutional and programme assistance received from the Government of Germany. It expressed its gratitude to the Government of India for providing host facilities and institutional support to APCTT, and to the Government of the Netherlands, UNDP, UNCTAD, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and UNIDO for the programme support provided. It urged those countries that had not yet contributed to the support of the Centre to do so in order to strengthen it on a long-term basis.

Environment and sustainable development

Report on the Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific

136. The Commission had before it document E/ESCAP/1020.

137. It endorsed the recommendations of the Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, the Ministerial Declaration on Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, and the Regional Action Programme for Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development, 1996-2000. It urged that the recommendations and actions referred to in those instruments should be implemented in earnest by all concerned. The Commission adopted resolution 52/8 on the third Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific.

138. While acknowledging that domestic resource mobilization would need to be enhanced, the Commission noted that support from external sources would become imperative. It recognized the importance of considering the feasibility of establishing a regional funding mechanism when the existing resources were exhausted. However, in view of the current financial crisis within and outside the United Nations system, due

consideration should be given to the full utilization of all existing funding mechanisms.

139. The Commission provided the following guidance to the secretariat on the implementation of the Regional Action Programme, in particular that it should:

(a) Convene an expert group meeting to prioritize the activities, set targets and identify the time-frame for the achievement of the activities, and translate the programme areas into portfolios of projects, taking into consideration the diverse economic and environmental conditions of the countries in the region;

(b) Develop subregional cooperation and promote activities in cooperation with subregional entities, and build regional capacities to deal with transboundary issues such as pollution, haze and the dumping of wastes at sea;

(c) Promote regional cooperation to enable countries to learn from each other's experiences through exchange of information and expertise;

(d) Support the establishment of regional human resources development institutions which could enhance the regional capacity to achieve sustainable development;

(e) Enhance inter-agency cooperation on the implementation of programmes and projects to avoid duplication and efficiently utilize the limited available resources, and focus on activities of regional significance.

140. The Commission urged members and associate members to designate national focal points to liaise with the secretariat on the implementation of the Regional Action Programme and to develop coordination mechanisms at the national level.

141. The Commission requested that the three major groups, namely the private sector, non-governmental organizations and the media, should actively contribute inputs to the decision-making process of Governments, and that those groups should be encouraged to participate in programmes on sustainable development.

142. The Commission considered that the 1995 report on the state of the environment in the region provided a good basis for environmental action in the countries of the region. It requested the secretariat to continue to issue reports on the state of the environment. It urged ESCAP to collect the data for those reports on a regular basis. It also requested the related agencies in member Governments to cooperate with the secretariat by making the data available so that the reports could become even more useful and informative.

143. The Commission noted the increasing complexity of links between trade and environment policies. Regional action plans were needed to enable members and associate members to work towards establishing collective approaches to issues in which they had a common interest, such as eco-labelling schemes and evolving technical regulations and environmental standards that took into account the social and economic contexts of the developing countries of the region. The Commission urged the secretariat, in undertaking activities related to trade and the environment, to consult and coordinate fully with other international organizations and with the specialized agencies of the United Nations system to avoid duplication of effort.

144. The Commission expressed the view that the environmental impact of transport was a particularly important issue and that the development of transport infrastructure was a major determinant in patterns of land use. The rapid economic growth in the ESCAP region provided an opportunity to adopt environmentally sound technologies for the development of infrastructure and transport operations. The regional member countries had the opportunity to take the lead in the development of environmentally sustainable transport systems. The appropriate integration of user-friendly modes of transport, such as railways, and the application of multimodal transport techniques would become increasingly important. The approach to developing sustainable transport should include sharing and learning from the experience of other countries within and outside the region. The activities of the secretariat on transport and the environment should follow an interdivisional multidisciplinary approach.

145. The Commission emphasized the importance of formulating and implementing social development and family planning programmes that were in line with the Bali Declaration on Population and Sustainable Development, Agenda 21 and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. Such policies and programmes were needed to stop rapid population growth and check the degradation of the environment. Recognizing the resource constraints faced by the secretariat, the Commission recommended that ESCAP should promote regional networking and TCDC approaches as cost-effective modalities for carrying out its work.

Progress in achieving sustainable development and issues requiring further attention

146. The Commission had before it document E/ESCAP/1021. It was informed of the national plans, policies and mechanisms for the environmental management and sustainable development of the member States. The Commission recognized that environmental problems were linked to poverty, population and socio-economic development and that national priorities varied. It expressed the opinion that the resolution of those problems was beyond the current national capacities and therefore international support was required for the provision of technical assistance and financial resources, and for environmentally sound technology.

147. The Commission was pleased to note that the urgent need to integrate environmental issues into social and economic decision-making was well recognized by the Governments in the region; most of those Governments had taken steps in that direction through their development strategies and legal systems. Economic growth, particularly when it was rapid and involved increasing industrialization and urbanization, often resulted in increased pressure on the environment. Sometimes, concern about the environment could constrain further economic growth. The human and financial capacity of Governments in the region to cope with the need to integrate environmental issues into economic decision-making remained very limited and many of their plans had not been realized. The Commission recognized the need to strengthen the assistance given to members and associate members in integrating environmental considerations into economic decision-making.

148. The Commission indicated its support for the development of databases on the environment. Several countries made commitments to share experience and to transfer technology to developing countries of the region through technical cooperation programmes.

149. The Commission reviewed the measures taken by members to implement Agenda 21 in the area of integrated water resources development and management. It indicated support for the secretariat's activities on water pricing and investment promotion in the water sector. It also encouraged the exchange of technology and experience among countries in addressing the problem of watershed degradation and water pollution.

150. The issue discussed under agenda item 5, as reflected in paragraph 58 of the present report, was also raised under agenda item 6(b).

151. The Commission noted that several countries in the region were in the process of formulating effective environmental policies, guidelines and related regulations to arrest environmental degradation from mining. It noted the requests of some member countries for training activities on environmental impact assessment in mining.

152. The Commission also noted that demand for minerals had increased owing to rapid industrialization in the region. It supported the initiative taken by the secretariat to undertake a study of mineral availability and demand flows in the region.

153. With regard to the planning of urban centres, the integration of geosciences into land-use planning was emphasized in the context of "food and safe shelter for the billions". The delegation of the Netherlands informed the Commission of the availability of the Underground Municipal Information System, which had been developed for the use of decision makers. He advocated the sustained use of the ESCAP Forum on Urban Geology in Asia and the Pacific.

154. In view of the rapid urbanization in the region, the Commission recommended that urban environmental issues relating to old, as well as to emerging, cities should be addressed in a timely manner. It requested the secretariat to assist countries in seeking relevant expertise and technologies to manage urban areas in a sustainable manner. The Commission adopted resolution 52/6 on the promotion of environmentally sound and healthy cities.

155. The database on pesticides and the environment was commended as a tool for dealing with the increasing use of hazardous farm chemicals in the region. The Commission urged wider and appropriate use of the database.

156. The Commission emphasized the importance of the transfer and acquisition of environmentally sound technologies by developing countries for meeting the objectives of Agenda 21 and the Regional Action Programme. A number of countries had already instituted national action programmes to foster environmentally sustainable development. It stressed the need to promote and finance the access to and the transfer of environmentally sound technologies. Some members of the Commission, while recognizing that the transfer of environmentally sound technologies to developing member States was constrained by commercial and non-commercial factors, felt that the developed countries had a responsibility to assist developing countries in acquiring clean technologies. However, some other members of the Commission felt that environmentally sound technologies should be transferred through the private sector and that such transfers should not entail concessional or preferential terms of trade. The Commission adopted resolution 52/7 on the transfer of environmentally sound technology.

157. The Commission advised the secretariat to further its efforts to promote greater regional cooperation in the dissemination of information on the application of environmentally sound technologies through its regional institutions such as APCTT.

158. The Commission recognized that space technology applications were an integral part of sustainable natural resources development and environmental management; such applications contributed to achieving sustainable development, enhancing quality of life, promoting economic growth and alleviating poverty in the region. Remote sensing and geographic information systems were important technologies for monitoring and assessing land-use change, real-time environmental phenomena and impending disasters such as cyclones, floods, storms and droughts.

159. The Commission was of the view that to assist members and associate members in building up their capability to manage the environment and their natural resources it was essential to establish an information

infrastructure based on integrated uses of space technology. ESCAP should play a critical role in promoting such an initiative and its applications.

160. The Commission recognized that, as one of its regional cooperation programmes, the Regional Space Applications Programme (RESAP) had brought significant benefits to participating countries despite the limited resources that had been available to the Programme. It recommended that RESAP should continue to be accorded high priority in the ESCAP programme of work and that UNDP should lend its financial support to integrated uses of space applications in its sixth intercountry programme.

161. The regional network and TCDC approaches that ESCAP had adopted in implementing the recommendations of the Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Development in Asia and the Pacific were commended; they were seen as an effective way to deal with the current financial constraints.

162. The Commission recalled its resolution 51/11 of 1 May 1995 on regional cooperation on space applications for environment and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific. By that resolution it had decided to conduct a mid-term review of the progress in the implementation of RESAP. An item on the review would be included in the agenda of the fifty-third session of the Commission. The secretariat was requested to make the necessary preparations for the review.

163. The Commission noted the progress at the national level in implementing the Strategy for Regional Cooperation in Space Applications for Sustainable Development and the Action Plan on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific. Several countries had expressed willingness to share their expertise and experiences as well as their space technology facilities with other members and associate members. The Russian Federation brought to the attention of the Commission that, at its space programme facilities, it had vast capability to undertake research and experimental and other activities, including the evaluation of mineral resources potential, navigation and meteorology.

164. The Commission expressed gratitude to the Government of France for earmarking US$ 200,000 for two projects within the framework of RESAP: a project on distance education and a project on coastal zone/mangrove management using space technology. It also expressed gratitude to the Government of Japan for its decision to despatch an expert on a long-term non-reimbursable loan basis to support the implementation of RESAP and the preparation of the mid-term review. The Commission noted with appreciation the offer of the Government of Pakistan to send an expert under a TCDC arrangement to assist in the implementation of the Strategy for Regional Cooperation and the Action Plan.

Emerging issues and developments in integrated natural resources management in Asia and the Pacific

165. The Commission, in general, agreed with the conclusions contained in document E/ESCAP/1022 regarding the integration of environmental concerns into energy policy and planning and the policies to combat land degradation.

166. It recognized the critical importance of energy in social and economic development. At the same time it realized that the increasing demand for energy would lead to further deterioration of the environment. There was a need for an appropriate energy mix. However, the use of fossil fuels, particularly coal, would remain dominant in the region. In that respect, clean coal technology would play a major role in minimizing environmental impacts. There was a need for the promotion of new and renewable sources of energy technologies such as solar photovoltaics, hydropower, wind and geothermal energy systems. A suggestion was made that ESCAP might play a role in arranging a forum for the exchange of information and experience related to such technology.

167. With regard to the analysis of energy resources, a suggestion was made that the document should have provided more detail on the contribution of biomass in total energy supplies. Similarly, in the analysis of the energy reserve situation, it was noted that differing energy price assumptions could have very different implications. It was also argued that pricing and subsidy issues were to be treated cautiously as they would vary across countries.

168. The Commission recognized that efficiency improvement in energy production and use and energy conservation were effective means of containing or reducing pollution. It also recognized the difficulties of internalizing the costs of environmental impact mitigation measures, particularly against global warming. End-use equipment and appliances were not always affordable for wider application of end-use efficiency measures in developing countries. In endorsing the Asia Energy Efficiency 21 project, the Commission was of the view that it should be able to provide a venue for collaborative undertakings related to resolving global warming issues.

169. The Commission noted with appreciation the offer of several delegations and agencies to contribute and cooperate in energy planning, energy efficiency and air pollution abatement, especially through TCDC activities. A representative of ECE described experience gained in overcoming transboundary air pollution in Europe and suggested that cooperation between ECE and ESCAP should be initiated on that matter.

170. On the problems of desertification and land degradation, several delegations expressed their continuing concern. It was stressed that monitoring and

assessment, especially through remote sensing, were important for addressing those problems. Some countries had established comprehensive land-use policies and plans. It was recommended that ESCAP should provide recent statistical data and facilitate the transfer of technical information.

171. It was also emphasized that, in implementing desertification programmes and plans of action, consideration should be given to Commission resolution 51/12 of 1 May 1995 on the strengthening of the Regional Network of Research and Training Centres on Desertification Control in Asia and the Pacific (DESCONAP). International organizations and agencies expressed support for combating desertification and land degradation through, for example, UNESCO activities on land degradation and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) support for the DESCONAP network.

172. The Commission stated that the causes of land degradation were biophysical, the unsustainable practices in agriculture, mining and transport, and the dumping of waste. Policies should be strengthened and transformed into action to ensure sustainable development of land resources.

173. The Commission noted the information provided by ECE, UNESCO, UNEP and the South Asian Cooperative Environment Programme.

Poverty alleviation through economic growth and social development

174. The Commission had before it documents E/ESCAP/1023, E/ESCAP/1024 and E/ESCAP/1025 relating to poverty alleviation through economic growth and social development and it endorsed the recommendations contained in those documents.

175. The Commission recommended that national policies and programmes targeted directly at the poor should be continued and strengthened. Those programmes should adopt a holistic approach to the reduction of poverty, focusing on enhancing the income-generation capacity of the poor, as well as their access to social infrastructure facilities, health and education. It also recommended that the activities of the Commission on poverty alleviation should be strengthened to include analytical studies on various aspects of poverty, and the provision of technical assistance and advisory services, particularly in designing and implementing poverty alleviation programmes.

176. The Commission recommended that, in its poverty alleviation programmes, the secretariat should also pay due attention to urban poverty. Policies and programmes should be formulated to enhance the productivity and income of the participants of the informal sector in which a great majority of the urban poor found employment. Poverty alleviation programmes should also focus on secondary cities, small towns and rural centres.

177. It recommended that the secretariat should promote greater interaction and exchange of information on the implementation of the Regional Action Plan on Urbanization among the focal points designated by countries for its implementation.

178. It concluded that, while the long-term solution to poverty was sustained growth of income and the creation of greater employment opportunities, there was a need to have special programmes targeted at the poorest segments of society, those facing the adverse impact of the economic reform process initiated in several countries.

179. The Commission called upon the secretariat to strengthen its efforts in promoting technology transfer, especially that suitable for difficult environmental conditions, and in disseminating, and exchanging information and experience related to rural industrialization and the technological upgrading of small and medium-scale industries in small towns and urban centres, which provided employment for the low-income population.

180. It recommended that cooperation among its members and associate members in the marketing of agricultural products should be encouraged and supported as that would have a significant impact on poverty alleviation.

181. The Commission recommended that sustainable strategies and support services should be developed to encourage women to participate in economic activities in both the formal and the informal sectors. Measures needed to be taken to provide women with adequate opportunities for skill training through formal, informal or non-formal channels. Flexible working hours, support facilities for women workers such as crèches for children, transport and other forms of assistance needed to be introduced. The Commission emphasized the need for coordinated action involving collaborative partnership between Governments, non-governmental organizations, local government units, the private sector and international organizations in implementing such programmes. It adopted resolution 52/3 on the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women.

182. The Commission recommended that national efforts to implement the Agenda for Action on Social Development in the ESCAP Region should be facilitated, that clear priorities should be set for the efficient utilization of existing resources and that new and innovative sources of financing should be sought to augment the resources for social development.

183. The Commission recommended that country efforts to address the HIV/AIDS crisis should be

facilitated and strengthened through a coordinated approach of the concerned United Nations agencies. The Commission adopted resolution 52/5 on regional cooperation in response to the spread and consequences of the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome in the Asian and Pacific region.

184. The Commission recommended the following courses of action to implement the Agenda for Action for the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002: (a) follow-up activities should be undertaken in support of national implementation of the Agenda; (b) ongoing initiatives should be extended to develop pilot projects on the promotion of non-handicapping environments for disabled and elderly persons; (c) more cities should be included in the series of pilot projects for non-handicapping environments; and (d) information exchange should be organized on measures for barrier-free environments within and outside the ESCAP region.

185. The Commission called upon the secretariat, in its implementation of the Jakarta Plan of Action on Human Resources Development in the ESCAP Region, to focus on investment in the productive capabilities of people and the utilization of those capabilities to enhance the quality of life.

186. The Commission recommended that the following core human resources development issues should receive priority attention: literacy and the provision of basic education, the delivery of basic social services, support of skills development and the promotion of productive employment for youth. The Commission adopted resolution 52/4 on promoting human resources development among youth in Asia and the Pacific.

187. In its discussions, the Commission expressed concern that, despite spectacular success in the enhancement of economic growth rates in many countries of the region, poverty remained a very serious problem in many countries. It expressed the view that it was not possible to depend totally on economic growth for a substantial reduction of poverty, although it was a necessary condition for poverty alleviation.

188. The Commission noted that the causes and correlates of poverty were many and interrelated. Some of the major causes of poverty were identified as population pressure, unemployment, lack of physical and financial assets, lack of education and training, and lack of health facilities. In formulating poverty alleviation strategies, member countries should give due attention to the multidimensional nature of poverty, which many were already doing.

189. The Commission noted that there was a need to follow up the various plans of action emanating from United Nations world conferences such as those recently held at Cairo and Beijing. However, given budgetary constraints, it was necessary to examine alternative ways to implement those activities, including shifting priorities and reprogramming existing resources. There was also the need to tackle those activities in a coordinated manner with a clear delineation of impact, sustainability and prioritization.

190. It also noted that, although the implementation of poverty alleviation programmes was the primary responsibility of national Governments, international organizations, including ESCAP, had a major role to play in facilitating the capability of national Governments to discharge their responsibilities.

191. The Commission pointed out that programmes for sustainable economic growth and poverty alleviation should be balanced between rural and urban areas in order to limit poverty-induced migration, and that the development of the second and third tiers of settlements was important for balanced, equitable and sustainable development. It further noted that countries, including those with economies in transition, needed to develop comprehensive policies to protect the poor from the impact of globalization and structural adjustment policies.

192. The Commission noted that the following three-pronged strategy might considerably alleviate poverty: (a) supporting economic growth sustained by a stable macroeconomic framework, free markets and the provision of infrastructure; (b) enhancing the capacity of poor people by providing education and health services in order for them to be able to participate in development activities; and (c) providing support through some form of safety net for disadvantaged groups such as farmers in drought-stricken areas.

193. The Commission noted that many developing countries were highly dependent on the agricultural sector and that rural poverty was a major problem in the Asian and Pacific region. It was informed that countries were trying to alleviate rural poverty by creating assets and generating income among rural households. It also noted the need to undertake innovative programmes with the direct participation of local community members, as well as to generate gainful employment for unemployed and underemployed persons in the rural areas.

194. The Commission recognized that the rural poor should be provided with collateral-free but non-subsidized credit, through innovative rural financing institutions, as that would have a significant impact on alleviating rural poverty.

195. It emphasized the role of accelerating the development and upgrading of rural infrastructure in generating overall economic growth leading to greater employment, regional equity, poverty alleviation and efficient utilization of resources.

196. It noted the follow-up actions of countries to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for

Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Jakarta Declaration and Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women in Asia and the Pacific. Those included preparations of national plans of action emphasizing strategies towards attaining equal status for women in political, economic and social life.

197. The Commission recognized the importance of national machineries and focal points for the advancement of women in securing the full implementation of the Platform for Action and the importance of establishing those national machineries at the highest political level and strengthening existing ones. In that connection, the Commission welcomed the proposal of the Republic of Korea to host, in collaboration with ESCAP, a regional meeting on strengthening national machineries for the advancement of women, to be held in September 1996.

198. The Commission reminded the international community of the need to create a supportive international environment, by generating and reallocating external financial and technical resources to benefit women directly, increasing the market share of the developing countries of labour-intensive and primary products made by women and establishing selective price support schemes for products of primary concern to women.

199. It pointed out that women's training and skill development were essential for their productive and meaningful employment. The need for the promotion of women's participation in industrial and technological development and their improved access to technology, training and credit should be taken into account in the activities of the secretariat.

200. The Commission called for special attention to be given to the introduction of science, technology and industrialization in rural areas to increase the productivity and employment of the poor. The private sector should be encouraged to participate in the industrial and technological development of rural areas. Small and medium-scale industries, in both the formal and the informal sectors, could play an effective role in poverty alleviation.

201. It recognized that ageing of populations was occurring in most countries of the region and policies needed to be developed to cope with it. Such policies included the use of technology to permit the employment of the elderly, flexible hours of work and improved pension systems.

202. The Commission noted actions taken by member countries in implementing the Agenda for Action on Social Development in the ESCAP Region and in monitoring its progress in collaboration with non-governmental organizations and the private sector. Success in achieving the goals and targets of the Agenda for Action depended on the effectiveness of national policies, a favourable international economic climate, and strengthened partnerships between the developed and developing countries, as well as between Governments and civic society based on mutual commitments. Greater support from the developed countries was invited to ensure the full and efficient mobilization of human and financial resources for social development, especially in the least developed countries.

203. It recognized that its technical assistance activities in the field of social development should focus on such issues as identifying and targeting the absolute poor, promoting the assessment of the social dimension of major development programmes, and improving national capabilities and institutional frameworks for the effective implementation of the Agenda for Action.

204. The Commission stressed the adverse effects of drug abuse and related problems, including HIV/AIDS, on social and economic development in the region. It expressed its conviction that those problems could not be solved in isolation but required joint and collaborative efforts among countries. It was informed about the activities of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and noted with appreciation its intention to collaborate with ESCAP in its regional activities.

205. The Commission noted that the Agenda for Action for the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002, served as a sound basis for the development of national plans of action to promote the full participation and equality of people with disabilities. It reiterated its endorsement of the targets and recommendations of the Agenda for Action. In doing so, it also reiterated its support of regional efforts to promote the participation of disabled people in poverty-reduction measures. It underlined the value of regional and international cooperation directed at facilitating national fulfilment of the Decade goals. The Commission welcomed the announcement of the Government of Pakistan that it would contribute to the ESCAP technical cooperation trust fund for the Decade.

206. The Commission reaffirmed that human resources development was a key strategy for poverty alleviation and the cornerstone of national development policies and plans.

Regional Coordination Centre for Research and Development of Coarse Grains, Pulses, Roots and Tuber Crops in the Humid Tropics of Asia and the Pacific

207. The Commission recommended that the collaborative activities of the Centre with national, regional and international agricultural research and development institutes and organizations should be strengthened in order to enhance the effectiveness of poverty alleviation activities.

208. It also recommended that the Centre should undertake activities related to agricultural

diversification, the sustainability of upland agriculture, market development and the effects of trade liberalization on crop production, and thus contribute to poverty alleviation in rural areas in the region.

209. The Commission urged the Centre to continue activities under the framework of the human resources development and information services programme, in particular convening workshops and training courses for disseminating and transmitting information and methodologies for socio-economic studies in agriculture.

210. In its discussion of the Centre's report, the Commission noted the usefulness of the Centre's collaborative research and development projects, which covered a broad range of issues concerning agricultural diversification, the sustainability of upland agriculture, market prospects and women's role in agricultural development.

211. The Commission recognized the importance of the Centre's activities, which mainly focused on addressing poverty concerns of small farming communities in the region. It noted the steady expansion of the programme activities and the gradual increase in the programme resources of the Centre in recent years. At the same time, the Commission expressed concern over the continuing fragile financial base of the Centre. Special concern was expressed over the condition of the institutional support resources, which needed a substantial increase in contributions by members and associate members.

212. The Commission called for a further strengthening of programme resources and the provision of the services of experts by Governments, donor agencies and partner institutes, preferably in the form of non-reimbursable loans, so as to ensure the efficient and effective implementation of programme activities.

213. The Commission expressed its appreciation for the contributions received from the Governments of Austria, Bangladesh, France, India, Indonesia, Japan, Myanmar, Nepal, the Netherlands, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka and Thailand, and from Canadian University Services Overseas. Special appreciation was expressed for the sizeable increase in the contribution to the Centre's institutional resources by the Government of Indonesia, which had enabled the Centre to stabilize its basic operation and management functions appreciably.

Transport and communications

Transport and communications

214. The Commission had before it documents E/ESCAP/1026 and E/ESCAP/1027.

215. It recognized that transport and communications were an essential prerequisite for economic and social development. The lack of transport and communications infrastructure was a major cause of the high incidence of poverty in remote and rural areas. Governments in the region were attaching great importance to poverty alleviation through the provision of transport services.

216. The Commission endorsed the report of the Committee on Transport and Communications on its second session. It agreed with the recommendation of the Committee that in order to address in a coherent and coordinated manner the issues relating to the work programme implied by the New Delhi Action Plan on Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific, it was desirable to consider activities in a single forum. The Commission considered that the name of the Committee on Transport and Communications should be changed to "Committee on Transport, Communications, Tourism and Infrastructure Development", subject to the outcome of the general review of the subsidiary structure of the Commission, to be undertaken at its fifty-third session as mandated by its resolution 48/2 of 23 April 1992, and directed the secretariat to draft new terms of reference for the Committee.

217. The Commission expressed satisfaction at the results of the implementation of the regional action programme for phase II (1992-1996) of the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific. However, concern was expressed over the 11 projects that remained unfunded, even though some of the issues had been addressed with the cooperation of the private sector.

218. The Commission reiterated its strong support for the ALTID project and emphasized the importance of its completion; it also emphasized that both the Asian Highway and the Trans-Asian Railway networks, including Asia-Europe links, should be brought into operation at the earliest possible date, keeping also in view the strong support given to the development of land transport linkages at the first Asia-Europe Meeting, held in Bangkok in March 1996. The Commission adopted resolution 52/9 on intra-Asia and Asia-Europe land bridges.

219. The Commission approved the plan of action for the implementation of phase II (1996-1997) of the ALTID project, including a study on the development of the Trans-Asian Railway in the southern corridor linking South Asia with Europe, and stressed the need for further action for the implementation of Commission resolution 48/11 of 23 April 1992 on road and rail transport modes in relation to facilitation measures.

220. It stressed the particular importance of certain ALTID activities, namely bringing into operation (a) the northern routes of the Trans-Asian Railway linking Europe and North-East Asia, including the Tumen River area; (b) studying the land transport corridors between Central Asia and Europe; (c) studying the road network connecting China, Kazakstan, Mongolia, the Russian Federation and the Korean

peninsula; (d) studying the development of the Trans-Asian Railway in the southern corridor; and (e) developing the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway databases. It was also felt that a study on the development of the Trans-Asian Railway in the corridor connecting South-East Asia and North-East Asia should be undertaken. The Commission supported the convening of a policy-level meeting involving countries in that corridor. It was also felt that similar studies on the development of the Asian Highway and the Trans-Asian Railway in the corridor connecting Northern Europe with the Russian Federation, Turkmenistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran should be included in the projected phase III (1998-1999) of the ALTID project.

221. Regarding the ASEAN initiative on the development of a rail link from Singapore through Malaysia, Thailand, Viet Nam and on to Kunming, China, to assist the development of economies in the Greater Mekong subregion, the Commission stressed that the cooperation between ESCAP and ASEAN should be strengthened in view of the revival of the ASEAN Senior Transport Officials Meeting and regular meetings of the ASEAN Transport Ministers.

222. The Commission noted with appreciation that a new railway line linking the railways of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkmenistan would be inaugurated in May 1996, thus completing a new "silk rail route" from China to Europe and also providing the landlocked Central Asian republics with rail access to seaports in the south. It was also noted that the Islamic Republic of Iran was mobilizing national resources and seeking external aid to construct a railway line to link its railway network with that of Pakistan.

223. A joint ESCAP/UNCTAD pilot project on the railway wagon information and control system to be implemented in Bangladesh with a view to transferring the experience to other countries was also noted with interest.

224. The Commission recognized that, without private investment, many countries faced major problems in adequately expanding infrastructure and that there were important potential benefits from the implementation of policies to privatize and corporatize elements of the transport and communications sector to improve the efficiency of management and operations. In order to facilitate private sector participation, the Governments of the region should consider the need for (a) transparency in the decision-making process; (b) guarantees for debt coverage by Governments; (c) enhancement of deregulation legislation for infrastructure enterprises; and (d) promotion of loan programmes sponsored by international finance organizations. The Commission considered that the proposed concepts and guidelines for the commercialization and privatization of ports would be of great assistance to countries in formulating appropriate policies.

225. The Commission expressed concern over the negative impact on the environment of transport infrastructure and services in countries of the region, which was particularly evident in the traffic congestion and pollution levels in large cities. It supported the secretariat's proposal to develop a comprehensive plan of activities on transport-related environmental issues, including emphasis on environmentally friendly and sustainable transport systems. It requested the secretariat to give higher priority to urban transport issues in such areas as human resources development and the investigation of low-cost urban transport systems.

226. The Commission stressed the importance of multimodal transport and the facilitation of maritime traffic, which it considered should be further strengthened. It supported the activities being planned in collaboration with UNCTAD and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to promote regional and subregional cooperation in the development of uniform legislation, and the harmonization of procedures, regulations, standards and documentation related to land and water transport. The Commission noted the details of two national workshops to be hosted by Bangladesh on multimodal transport and the facilitation of maritime traffic. It expressed appreciation to the Government of China for hosting a regional training programme on inland water transport in June 1996 and for its offer to host a subregional workshop on freight forwarding and multimodal transport operations at Dalian once funding was secured. It also noted the request of the Lao People's Democratic Republic that a country-level workshop on transport insurance be organized as a follow-up to an earlier workshop on freight forwarding.

227. The Commission noted the reports received from Brunei Darussalam, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Nepal, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation on the significant national projects in the transport and communications sector which were contributing to the healthy growth of the region.

228. It requested the secretariat to give special attention in the implementation of its programme of work to the specific needs of least developed, landlocked and island developing countries and disadvantaged economies in transition.

229. The Commission expressed its deep appreciation to the following donor countries and agencies for their continuing support for activities in the transport, communications and tourism sector: China, France, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, the Republic of Korea, UNDP, the World Bank and ADB.

230. The representative of the International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations stressed the important role of freight forwarders in the promotion of trade and urged the secretariat to continue its efforts to support the development of multimodal

transport and the freight forwarding industry in the countries of the region.

231. The Commission welcomed the information provided by IMO on its close collaboration with the secretariat in undertaking activities to promote the facilitation of maritime transport and its offer to work with the secretariat in addressing maritime issues raised by the Commission.

Tourism

232. Recognizing the important role of tourism in the socio-economic development of the Asian and Pacific region, the Commission stressed that tourism should be given high priority in the ESCAP programme and urged the secretariat to intensify its tourism activities. It recognized the need for the secretariat to expand the Professional regular staff resources allocated to tourism activities. It also recognized the need to upgrade the existing post for tourism in view of the increased responsibilities resulting from the greatly expanded scope of the programme. The Commission was informed that all recruitment and promotions were currently suspended owing to the financial crisis. However, the secretariat would submit a request for the reclassification of the post to United Nations Headquarters once the situation became normal. Subject to a successful outcome of that process, the secretariat would consider upgrading the current post by redeployment from within existing resources. It suggested that one way to strengthen the Tourism Unit would be to explore the possibilities of obtaining the services of experts on a non-reimbursable loan basis from countries with a rich experience in tourism.

233. The Commission strongly supported the activities to promote sustainable tourism development, noting that they were relevant to the major concerns of the region. It requested the secretariat to place special emphasis on activities related to integrated tourism planning and development, appraisal of the economic impact of tourism, environmental management of tourism development, human resources development in the tourism sector, tourism infrastructure development and investment, and regional and subregional cooperation in the development and promotion of tourism and facilitation of travel. It requested the secretariat to play a catalytic role in promoting TCDC in the field of tourism. It noted the suggestion that ESCAP should consider initiating activities to promote tourism along the Asian Highway.

234. The Commission endorsed the convening in December 1996 of an intergovernmental meeting on tourism development and the formation of a regional network of tourism training institutes and organizations in the Asian and Pacific region.

235. It appreciated the efforts to promote tourism in the Greater Mekong subregion and requested the secretariat to strengthen its activities in that area. It was pleased to note that ESCAP, in collaboration with ADB, had contributed to the establishment of the Working Group on the Greater Mekong Subregion Tourism Sector, which had provided a useful mechanism for cooperation in implementing tourism projects. It also noted that preparations were being made for a study on Mekong/Lancang River tourism planning and on facilitation of travel to and within the subregion. It supported the proposed project on strengthening cooperation in tourism development in the Greater Mekong subregion, submitted to the Government of France, and hoped that it would receive favourable consideration.

236. Noting that tourism played a particularly important role in the economies of Pacific island countries, the Commission requested the secretariat to pay special attention to their needs. The secretariat was also requested to pay attention to the specific needs of least developed countries, economies in transition and countries in an early stage of tourism development. It noted the request of the Northern Mariana Islands for assistance in appraising the socio-economic benefits of tourism.

237. The Commission was pleased to note that ESCAP had maintained excellent working relationships with the World Tourism Organization and other international organizations involved in tourism. It expressed gratitude to the Government of Japan for extending financial support to the ESCAP tourism activities and for providing the secretariat with experts on a non-reimbursable loan basis. The Commission hoped that Japan would continue its support in view of the expanded scope of ESCAP tourism activities.

Ministerial Conference on Infrastructure

238. The Commission noted that the convening of the Ministerial Conference on Infrastructure in October 1996 was timely, as it would provide the opportunity for a smooth transition between phase II (1992-1996) of the Transport and Communications Decade and the New Delhi Action Plan.

239. The Commission approved the arrangements being made for holding the Ministerial Conference on Infrastructure and the World Infrastructure Forum-Asia, 1996, concurrently. It endorsed the idea of allocating time for a question-and-answer session which would provide the opportunity to explain differences in circumstances and approaches in individual countries.

240. It expressed appreciation to the Government of India for offering to host the Ministerial Conference on Infrastructure and the World Infrastructure Forum in New Delhi in October 1996 and to the Government of Malaysia for offering to host in Kuala Lumpur in July 1996 the Expert Group Meeting which would consider the papers to be submitted to the Ministerial Conference.

241. The Commission recognized that the country reports currently being prepared by Governments for the Ministerial Conference would be of considerable value to member countries and to the private sector.

242. It stressed the importance of inter-agency cooperation and coordination through the Inter-agency Subcommittee on Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific for the implementation of the New Delhi Action Plan. The programme should be regularly monitored by the Committee and ad hoc intergovernmental meetings.

243. The Commission recognized that the Asia Infrastructure Development Alliance (AIDA) represented a unique and interesting initiative and expressed satisfaction at progress in its establishment. It welcomed the fact that AIDA would be launched on 29 October 1996 at the Ministerial Conference on Infrastructure prior to the adoption of the report and the Ministerial Declaration.

Regional Action Programme for Infrastructure Development

244. The Commission endorsed the Regional Action Programme for Infrastructure Development, noting that its 8 subprogrammes and 20 programme elements were directly relevant to the needs of the countries of the region. It noted the importance of subprogramme 7, Poverty alleviation, rural areas and disadvantaged population groups, and subprogramme 8, Infrastructure needs of the least developed, landlocked and island developing countries and the disadvantaged economies in transition. Programme elements 1.3: Asian land transport infrastructure development, 1.5: Infrastructure development for tourism, 2.2: Management, maintenance and modernization of infrastructure facilities and services, and 2.3: Infrastructure development financing were proposed as high priority activities. Early implementation of activities under programme element 3.1: Promotion of appropriate private sector participation in infrastructure development and operations was also requested. The Commission agreed with the proposed phasing of the implementation of the Regional Action Programme, that is, phase I (1997-2001) and phase II (2002-2006). That would allow maximum flexibility in responding to changing priorities within the region at the project level. The Commission considered that the task of translating the Regional Action Programme into an operational set of activities for the benefit of member countries should be considered by the Ministerial Conference.

245. The Commission noted the request by the delegations of India and the Philippines for a number of specific projects to be included under the Regional Action Programme. Those requests would be considered with others proposed in the Committee on Transport and Communications in the preparation of documentation for the Ministerial Conference. The Commission supported a proposal to widen and improve the potential of training and educational institutions active in the infrastructure sector. It noted the offer of the delegation of the Russian Federation to assist in the human resources development programme in the area of transport under the New Delhi Action Plan.

246. The Commission urged donor countries and financial institutions, including the World Bank and ADB, to continue their support of infrastructure development initiatives in countries of the region. Noting the importance of infrastructure development, the Commission urged UNDP to continue to support activities outside the four focus areas of sustainable human development.

247. The Commission noted the comments of the International Telecommunication Union that, in telecommunications, several countries had identified liberalization, competition and regulation as important areas that could be included in the New Delhi Action Plan.

248. The Commission also noted the proposal of the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity that all ESCAP activities in telecommunications should be coordinated by the Transport, Communications and Tourism Division to avoid fragmentation.

Statistics

249. The Commission had before it the document on selected issues in the field of statistics (E/ESCAP/1028), and the report of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/1029).

250. The Commission noted that the secretariat's activities in the field of statistics had made a very useful contribution to the development of statistics in the countries of the region and had assisted significantly in strengthening national statistical capabilities. It supported the secretariat's efforts to take into account the statistical needs of different groups of member countries, including the disadvantaged economies in transition. It was suggested that ESCAP should encourage countries to adopt a strategic approach to statistical capacity-building through such means as user needs assessment, work planning and human resources development.

251. In taking note of the issues raised at the ninth session of the Working Group of Statistical Experts, held at Bangkok in January-February 1996, the Commission suggested that the statistics subprogramme should provide support for other subprogrammes within the medium-term plan, 1998-2001, particularly environment and sustainable development, poverty alleviation through economic growth and social development, and the least developed, landlocked and island developing countries. It also noted the view that special attention should be paid to the terms of reference of the Committee on Statistics, its role as the focus of

regional statistical development and its retention within the ESCAP conference structure. The Working Group's recommendations on the agenda for the tenth session of the Committee were also brought to the Commission's attention.

252. The Commission felt that document E/ESCAP/1028 provided a useful and comprehensive review of important issues in the area of statistics which needed to be addressed in the light of various global developments, and it generally supported the recommendations and conclusions contained in the document. It noted that the statistical implications of the recently concluded world summits on social issues had been correctly elaborated. Strong national statistical systems were required to help develop effective social policies, make sound decisions, monitor social change and evaluate the impact of social and economic policies in order to implement the action plans of the summits. The need to improve the reliability, validity and international comparability of social statistics, their greater disaggregation, particularly by gender, and their wider dissemination and use was also emphasized. The Commission recommended that Governments should accord high priority to generating and maintaining an adequate database to monitor national progress in achieving the targets of the summit policy themes. The need to improve the concepts and definitions of statistics on poverty and to develop poverty indicators for intercountry comparisons was also noted.

253. While generally supporting the proposed minimum national social data set described in the secretariat document, the Commission felt that the main focus should nevertheless be on the means of strengthening national social statistics. ESCAP and other regional commissions had a key role to play in assisting countries to identify statistical gaps and skill deficiencies and in developing strategies to bridge those gaps. It recommended that the secretariat should prepare a manual on social statistics and organize training workshops in that field. The Commission urged donor countries and organizations to provide financial and other support to the secretariat to enable it to collect and exchange relevant information on national capacities in social statistics and to organize related technical assistance and training activities. It noted the activities reported by some of the countries participating in the project on the improvement of statistics on gender issues. One output of the project was national plans of action for bridging data gaps and strengthening databases for implementation by concerned data source agencies.

254. The Commission affirmed that the scope and pace of implementation of the 1993 System of National Accounts (SNA) depended on the needs and capabilities of national authorities. It noted that in some countries the 1993 SNA would be adapted to suit local conditions. It endorsed the subregional training workshops proposed by the secretariat for assisting countries in the region to implement the System and urged bilateral and multilateral donors to provide support to the secretariat for that purpose. The Commission emphasized the need for training middle-level statisticians on the 1993 SNA and noted that training should be undertaken on a timely basis to ensure its impact. It noted that, for some countries, there were specific issues that needed to be addressed, such as the compilation of regional accounts, the valuation of unpaid work by household members and the contribution of the informal sector. Further work on integrating economic and environmental accounting and on financial intermediation services indirectly measured was also needed.

255. Recognizing the growing importance of trade in services in the region, the Commission emphasized the need for availability and comparability of statistics in that field and urged the secretariat to assist member countries in that regard. It noted that some countries were focusing attention on obtaining detailed information on service transactions. It welcomed the offer of the Government of Japan to provide technical assistance on both the compilation of statistics on trade in services and the 1993 SNA on a case-by-case basis.

256. The Commission emphasized the importance of sharing experience in the use of information technology in statistics as a means of improving statistical capability. It supported the recommendation of the Working Group of Statistical Experts that the secretariat should act as a clearing house to support such an exchange of information. While introducing new means for data dissemination and data collection in member countries, the rapid evolution of information technology had also substantially increased training requirements in statistical offices. Training of statisticians in information technology was particularly important in countries where the utilization of technologies such as geographic information systems and networking was still at a rudimentary stage. The Commission also suggested a complementary approach in which information technology personnel would be trained in statistics; it asked the secretariat to organize information technology sensitivity training among senior-level policy makers.

257. The Commission noted that several national statistical offices had already established World Wide Web pages on the Internet and that some had plans to incorporate Internet technology in their national statistical information systems. It recognized that on-line Internet technology still contained security risks and therefore cautioned the national statistical offices not to become too reliant on the use of the Internet for key activities.

258. The importance of statistical coordination within countries was stressed by the Commission; there was a need for effective utilization and operation of coordination instruments. In the absence of effective coordination it was difficult for national statistical agencies to achieve a number of their objectives, such

as standardizing concepts and definitions, producing accurate and timely statistics, ensuring a maximum of integration in statistical processes and outputs, and meeting the demand for statistics effectively and efficiently. Coordination was also necessary for raising awareness among various government agencies of the importance of administrative records as sources of data; in the absence of such awareness, basic data sources were often lost as agencies adjusted their systems. The Commission suggested that the secretariat should organize a meeting to share information and exchange the experience of countries in implementing statistical coordination.

259. The Commission urged member States to pay due attention to, and provide adequate resources for, conducting the next round of population and housing censuses. It heard with appreciation about the steps being taken by a number of countries to plan the censuses of the 2000 decade and to improve their scope, methodology and questionnaire design. The Commission noted that several countries were planning to release population and housing census data with the least possible delay through the use of modern technology and decentralization of data processing. The need for ESCAP to play a prominent role in assisting countries in preparing for the 2000 round of population and housing censuses was emphasized; in that context, some countries mentioned their requirements for technical assistance and training, for example, in enumerating special population groups.

260. The Commission noted with gratitude that, since the fifty-first session, the secretariat had received substantial bilateral donor assistance for its activities in statistics from the Governments of Japan, the Netherlands, the Republic of Korea and Sweden, while Australia had contributed by providing technical inputs to meetings organized by the secretariat. Multilateral assistance had been generously provided by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), and the World Bank; the European Commission, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), OECD and WTO had also helped through the provision of resource persons.

Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific

261. The Commission welcomed the establishment of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific as a subsidiary body of the Commission and noted the contents of the report submitted by the Governing Board of the Institute, which had held its first session in March 1996. It also noted that the Governing Board had decided to establish a task force to evaluate and restructure the Institute's programme in accordance with the changing needs and priorities in the region. The Commission requested that the decisions of the Governing Board regarding the task force be implemented at the earliest possible date.

262. In discussing the activities of the Institute, the Commission recognized that training was essential for upgrading the capability of national statistical offices in the collection, processing and analysis of data. It requested the Institute to continue and to expand its programmes of training, especially with regard to sampling, data processing, analysis and interpretation of statistics, report writing and dissemination. It requested the Institute to train users of statistics. It stressed the importance of producer-user interaction and the need to train statisticians in interpersonal and communication skills. In particular, it noted the importance of assisting the least developed, landlocked and island developing countries. The Commission was informed that many of the smaller statistical offices were losing trained staff and that consequently there was an urgent need to train officers from those countries.

263. The Commission encouraged the Institute to expand its training to support the implementation of decisions taken at global summit meetings, as well as to support the work of the subprogrammes of ESCAP. It stressed the importance of training to improve data on human development indicators and related social statistics.

264. It stressed the importance of information technology in statistical work and the need to familiarize national statistical offices with new developments in that field. It suggested that the Institute should play a central role in training statisticians in the region in the use of information technology.

265. The adoption in 1993 of the revised SNA, and the consequent programme for implementing the revised System, had created an urgent need to orient and train middle-level as well as senior statisticians; the Commission recognized that it was important for the Institute to respond to that demand.

266. The Commission expressed concern about the need to improve the financial stability of the Institute and noted with appreciation that several countries had pledged an increase in their annual contributions to the institutional budget of the Institute. It noted the guidelines set by the Commission with regard to minimum contributions to regional institutions and appealed to all members and associate members to provide financial support for the Institute. It requested member countries, where possible, to provide experts on a non-reimbursable loan basis to support the programmes of the Institute.

267. The Commission expressed profound gratitude to the Government of Japan, the host country of the Institute, for the support it had been providing through financial and in-kind contributions to the Institute since its establishment, as well as for the award of training fellowships for the courses conducted in Tokyo. It welcomed the expression of continued support by the Government of Japan for the Institute. The Commission also expressed its appreciation to UNDP for the valuable

support it had been extending since 1970 and for the programme support provided during the last phase to improve the capability of countries to generate reliable and timely indicators on human development. It urged UNDP to continue to support the Institute's cost-effective outreach programmes and invited other international donor agencies to contribute to the Institute's activities.

268. The Commission expressed warm appreciation to the outgoing Director of the Institute for his eight years of service and welcomed the appointment of the Director-designate.

Least developed, landlocked and island developing countries

269. The Commission had before it document E/ESCAP/1030. Several issues were raised in the course of its deliberations. The Commission stressed that advice and assistance rendered by ESCAP to least developed, landlocked and island developing countries should continue to be given priority attention.

Emerging issues and developments: least developed and landlocked developing countries

270. The Commission took note of the outcome of the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Mid-term Global Review of the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s, held in New York from 26 September to 6 October 1995. It noted with concern the lack of progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action and the continuing relatively poor economic growth performance of the least developed countries in the region. It recognized that those countries faced a variety of physical, locational and economic constraints which were very difficult to overcome. For progress to be achieved, the efforts at the national level by the least developed countries themselves needed to be actively supported by the international community through financial and technical assistance and through special measures in their favour.

271. The Commission urged the secretariat to continue to monitor and assist in the implementation of the Programme of Action to improve the socio-economic situation of the least developed countries of the region.

272. It noted that many least developed countries had made concerted efforts at macroeconomic reform, the maintenance of macroeconomic stability, the sound management of public expenditure, properly planned monetary growth and maintenance of appropriate exchange rates, and at encouraging the development of their local private sector. It also noted that the least developed countries often did not have adequate financial and human resources to implement the desired reforms and that the management of a market-oriented economy and its integration into the world economy required an appropriate capacity and institutional framework.

273. The Commission recommended that policies and programmes to promote capacity- and institution-building within those countries should be intensified and that high priority should be given by the international community to assisting the countries in those efforts.

274. It noted that the least developed countries continued to rely on ODA as their major source of external finance. The decline in ODA from both bilateral and multilateral sources, as noted during the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting, was a major cause for concern for the least developed countries in the region.

275. The Commission urged that aid targets and commitments as set out in the Programme of Action should be met and that adequate funding of multilateral institutions, including ESCAP, should be assured, to support their efforts for the benefit of least developed countries.

276. The Commission recognized that many least developed countries continued to face a serious debt problem, which constituted a major hindrance to their efforts at adjustment and reactivation of their economies. There was a recognized need to alleviate their debt burden so as to reduce their debt-servicing liabilities to a sustainable level; that would entail a strengthened international debt strategy for both bilateral official debt and multilateral debt.

277. The Commission urged member States to implement concrete measures to alleviate the debt burden and increase concessional financing in support of appropriate economic policy measures.

278. It recognized that the expansion of foreign investment could contribute significantly to the development of least developed countries and that it was also an essential component of strengthening regional economic cooperation. The more successful developing countries in the Asian and Pacific region might be important sources of investment flows to their less successful neighbours.

279. The Commission recommended that appropriate support should be given to least developed countries in their efforts to attract foreign investment.

280. It acknowledged that, in order to comply with the new multilateral trade rules of WTO and to identify new trading opportunities arising from the outcome of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations, the least developed and landlocked developing countries needed to reformulate their trade policies and review their legal and institutional framework. It noted the interest among the least developed countries in the establishment of a safety net to assist them in coping with the immediate and short-term adverse effects arising from the implementation of the Uruguay Round agreements.

281. In order to enable least developed countries to maximize the opportunities arising from the Uruguay Round agreements, the Commission recommended that technical assistance should be given to them to enhance the institutional and human capacities required to comply with obligations arising from WTO membership, to develop supply capabilities of tradable goods and services and to enhance their capacity to make full use of generalized system of preferences (GSP) schemes. Similar assistance should be given to non-members of WTO to facilitate their accession. In addition, consideration should be given to improving GSP schemes for products of interest to least developed countries and to applying rules of origin in a flexible and supportive manner.

282. Recognizing the specific needs arising from the geographical handicaps of least developed and landlocked countries, the Commission noted that the problems of small and dispersed domestic markets and high transport costs were reflected in the high costs of implementing development projects and of providing social services such as health, education, infrastructure, electricity and water. It also noted the impact of annual natural disasters, which continued to affect the quality of life adversely in the least developed countries.

283. The Commission recommended that activities to address the transport and infrastructure concerns of those countries should be strengthened. It also requested donors to increase assistance to the least developed countries to reduce the damage of annual natural disasters, especially floods and droughts.

284. The Commission noted with appreciation the offers of TCDC and ECDC activities by several developing member countries and urged least developed countries to take greater advantage of those offers.

Emerging issues and developments: island developing countries

285. With respect to Pacific island developing countries, the Commission noted that the fast-changing international economic environment was having an increasing impact on the development performance of Pacific island countries. In particular, as a result of the successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations, it was of crucial importance that Pacific island countries should strive to increase and diversify their exports and attract increased flows of foreign direct investment. While stressing the need and the opportunity for Pacific island countries to develop their trade and investment relationships with Asian countries, the Commission also emphasized the importance of enhancing such relationships among themselves. It expressed appreciation to the Government of Japan for its plans to establish the South Pacific Economic Exchange Support Centre in Tokyo. It hoped that the Centre would contribute to enhancing the trade and investment links of Pacific island countries with Japan. It welcomed the advice provided by the secretariat to several Pacific island countries on the results of the Uruguay Round and on WTO issues, as well as the assistance given to Pacific island countries to enhance their trade and investment links, especially with dynamic Asian economies.

286. The Commission urged the secretariat and other concerned agencies to continue providing technical assistance and advice to Pacific island countries in the area of trade and investment, including giving advice on issues related to WTO accession and obligations, and assisting Pacific island countries in enhancing their trade and investment relationships with the dynamic Asian countries, as well as among themselves.

287. The Commission, recognizing the need for Pacific island countries to strive for open economies, acknowledged that most of them had been making concerted efforts to pursue sound and stable domestic policies as well as to initiate policy reforms in order to remain competitive. It noted that their task was not easy and recognized the crucial role of external assistance to assist them in their endeavours. It also noted that the lack of reliable data in several countries was hindering the development, implementation and monitoring of appropriate policies.

288. The Commission urged the secretariat, including the ESCAP Pacific Operations Centre (ESCAP/POC), to continue to provide the Pacific island countries with advice on economic adjustment and reform measures, as well as assistance in the strengthening of national capacity in policy formulation and implementation, institution-building, and the collection and analysis of relevant statistical information.

289. It recognized that, given their fragile ecosystems and limited natural resources, Pacific island countries would need to put in place policies that promoted sustainable development. It acknowledged that most of those countries had undertaken initiatives at the national and subregional levels in recent years towards that end. However, more remained to be done, which would require continued international assistance. In that connection, the Commission welcomed the cooperation between ESCAP, especially through ESCAP/POC, and the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme in establishing the regional mechanism for monitoring the outcomes of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, held in Barbados in 1994.

290. The Commission requested the secretariat and other agencies and organizations to provide continued technical and advisory assistance to Pacific island countries in their efforts towards sustainable development.

291. It acknowledged the continued efforts of the secretariat, especially through ESCAP/POC, to assist

Pacific island countries in their development efforts. ESCAP/POC had continued to provide very valuable advice and assistance not only to Pacific island countries but also to subregional agencies.

292. The Commission requested the secretariat to continue to provide ESCAP/POC with the necessary financial and human resources. However, in the light of the current scarce resources, it urged the secretariat to maintain and strengthen existing cooperation with subregional organizations to avoid duplication of activities.

293. The Commission took note of the useful contribution that TCDC activities could make in human resources development and in strengthening institutions. It expressed appreciation to the several developing countries in Asia which had offered their services under their national TCDC activities to Pacific island countries.

294. The Commission urged Pacific island countries to take advantage of the available offers of TCDC and to make known their priority areas for TCDC assistance. It suggested that the developing countries in Asia offering such assistance under their national TCDC technical assistance programmes should try to match the priorities so identified.

295. The Commission expressed appreciation to all the donors that had provided resources to support ESCAP activities for the benefit of Pacific island countries. Contributions to the Pacific Trust Fund were singled out as being very useful as they had enabled the continuous and active participation of Pacific island countries in the annual Commission sessions. The Commission urged donors to continue their support for ESCAP activities for the benefit of those countries.

Programme planning

Medium-term plan, 1998-2001

296. The Commission had before it document E/ESCAP/1031 on the draft medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001.

297. The Executive Secretary pointed out that the draft medium-term plan was based on mandates established by the Commission in collaboration with other United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, keeping in view the ongoing and emerging development priorities in the region, so as to ensure a coordinated approach that would facilitate optimum results. The Commission was urged to review the draft plan prior to its submission to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly for final endorsement. However, in accordance with paragraph 5 of Commission resolution 48/2 of 23 April 1992, the Commission would review its conference structure, including its thematic priorities and its subsidiary structure, no later than at its fifty-third session. The content of the programme might require revision following that review. Proposed changes would be submitted to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly at the earliest possible date.

298. The Commission expressed satisfaction with and endorsed the draft medium-term plan, which it considered to be both comprehensive and extensive. It also considered that the plan reflected the thematic priorities mandated by the Commission in its resolution 48/2. The plan also took into account new challenges and the changing needs of the member countries. The Commission commended the emphasis on improved coordination and collaboration with other United Nations organizations and specialized agencies with the objectives of achieving an integrated approach and avoiding possible duplication of effort and overlapping.

299. The Commission noted that, for the plan to be more effective and efficacious, under subprogramme 1, Regional economic cooperation, the plan should focus on important areas, such as inter-subregional and intra-subregional economic cooperation, including trade initiatives, the use of information technology in the various sectors of development, the promotion of foreign direct investment and the transfer of technology within the region. Ways and means should be explored to strengthen the cooperation between North-East Asia and other subregions and countries. In the area of poverty alleviation, the importance of data exchange and technology transfer among ESCAP members for the design of rural and urban development initiatives should be given particular emphasis. Human resources development would be required to create and maintain a strong data analysis and exchange system.

300. On infrastructure development, the Commission noted that the plan should emphasize urban development and financing of infrastructure projects of economic importance to the region, including the ALTID project. Tourism development also constituted a crucial element of the plan.

301. In the field of statistics, the Commission noted that the plan should focus on the implications of expansion in the service sector, advances in information technology for statistical purposes and the need to adopt a total human resources development approach. The plan should also reflect the statistical implications of global summit meetings. To help tackle growing urban problems, ESCAP might consider initiating a programme for urban information systems involving the exchange between countries of priority statistical data on urban and subnational development. In general, the plan should serve to strengthen coordination within the United Nations family and with the international financial institutions, and in particular between the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific and the Statistics Department of IMF.

302. The Commission noted that the plan addressed the special problems and requirements of the least developed countries and the disadvantaged economies in transition, with attention to initiatives which would enable them to join the mainstream of economic development of the region and, consequently, to enjoy greater benefit from the economic dynamism and prosperity of the advanced member countries.

303. In taking note of the suggestions for further improvement of the plan, one delegation pointed out that the plan had to be realistic in the light of the prevailing financial difficulties of the United Nations and should reflect the need to exercise fiscal restraint.

304. Stating that, in spite of shrinking resources, every effort would be made to accommodate the needs and requirements of the member countries, the Executive Secretary noted that adjustments in the programme of work would be inevitable. He informed the Commission that United Nations Headquarters was studying the impact of the financial crisis on the programme of work. He assured the Commission that suggestions made by the member countries would be incorporated as far as possible in the medium-term plan.

Implementation of the programme of work, 1994-1995

305. The Commission had before it document E/ESCAP/1032 and Corr.1.

306. It expressed general satisfaction with the implementation of the programme of work, 1994-1995, which was the first to be based on the thematic approach mandated by the Commission in its resolution 48/2. It observed that a number of outputs and activities had been deleted, modified or postponed owing to the special measures imposed in relation to the United Nations financial crisis. The Commission was advised that the financial restraints imposed on all United Nations offices were expected to continue, and that the secretariat would take that into account in future programme planning.

307. It was noted that the regular budget staff resources utilized for the implementation of the programme of work were only 77.2 per cent of the regular budget staff resources allocated to the secretariat, which was requested to provide a further breakdown in terms of the percentage of regular budget staff resources which were unavailable owing to vacancies, redeployment, leave and illness.

Proposed programme changes, 1996-1997

308. The Commission had before it documents E/ESCAP/1033 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1. It was informed that the programmed activity 6-5-201 entitled "Follow-up to the mid-term review of progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s", which had been proposed for deletion, was now expected to be implemented within the biennium. The activity would, therefore, be retained in the programme of work.

309. The Commission noted that the General Assembly, in deciding on the programme budget for the biennium, 1996-1997, had imposed a ceiling of US$ 2,608 million for the biennium. It also noted the subsequent request to the secretariat to identify savings in staff and non-staff costs, amounting to US$ 3,750,000, in addition to the vacancies to be maintained at the rate of 6.4 per cent for regular budget staff, at both the Professional and General Service levels. To comply with the requirement, the secretariat had identified savings of US$ 93,000 allocated for the purchase of equipment and had proposed the freezing of 1,135 work-months from posts which were already vacant or were expected to become vacant shortly. That represented vacancy rates of approximately 11.5 per cent in the Professional and higher categories and 7.3 per cent in the General Service category. Those levels would be maintained for the biennium.

310. The Commission expressed concern that the proposed vacancy rates were higher than the estimated average vacancy rates of 9 per cent in the Professional and higher categories and 7 per cent in the General Service category which were to be achieved throughout the United Nations system. Concern was also expressed that the budget reduction would have an adverse impact on major priority areas of the programme of work, particularly trade policy and promotion, the environment, women in development and infrastructure development. Assistance in those areas was crucial to the countries in the region to accelerate their economic and social development. While recognizing the need for increased efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations, the Commission was of the view that reform should be implemented with due consideration being given to the urgent needs of developing countries.

311. The Commission noted the proposal that the secretariat should exert every effort to increase its share of the budget. It also noted the proposal that the secretariat should undertake a comparative analysis of the programmes of work of the various organizations providing technical assistance to the developing countries in the region for economic and social development. It was felt that such an analysis would be useful for identifying duplication or complementarity of work, thus contributing towards better use of resources as well as strengthening the role of ESCAP as a coordinator at the regional level.

312. The Commission felt that certain of the programme activities proposed for deletion were of sufficient importance that they should be retained. Those activities included training on trade in services; skills development for small and medium-sized industries; the generation, transfer, adoption and use of

conventional and new and emerging technologies; building up technological capacities for the application of environmentally sound technologies for industrial restructuring; and a workshop on methodologies of poverty measurement.

313. One delegation urged that ESCAP should continue to give priority to the Pacific island countries in its assistance programmes, and particularly to trade and investment cooperation between Pacific island countries and Asia. In that respect, the delegation stressed the importance of concerted efforts by the organizations within the United Nations system.

314. The Commission commended the recognition given to budget constraints. It also welcomed the proposed review of the publications programme with the objective of reducing the number of publications proposed for the current biennium, in line with the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

315. The Commission endorsed the proposed changes in the programme of work, 1996-1997, as contained in documents E/ESCAP/1033 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1. The programme of work is reproduced in annex I to the present report.

Calendar of meetings, April 1996-March 1997

316. The Commission endorsed the tentative calendar of meetings, April 1996 to March 1997, as contained in document E/ESCAP/1034.

317. The delegation of India noted that preparations were well in hand for three meetings to be held in New Delhi in October 1996: the Meeting of Senior Government Officials in Preparation for the Ministerial Conference on Infrastructure, the Ministerial Conference itself and the Fourth Meeting of the ESCAP Network on Trade Facilitation. In addition, preparations were under way for the Workshop on Sustainable Rural Development to be held in Hyderabad, India, in September 1996.

318. The delegation of Indonesia expressed preference for the fifty-third session of the Commission to be held in April 1997, rather than March 1997 as proposed in the tentative calendar of meetings.

319. The Commission welcomed the generous proposal of the Government of China to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of ESCAP at Shanghai, China, in March 1997. It adopted resolution 52/2 on the Shanghai symposium to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of ESCAP.

Technical cooperation activities of ESCAP and announcement of intended contributions

320. The Commission had before it document E/ESCAP/1035, which highlighted progress in the implementation of TCDC activities, extrabudgetary-funded technical cooperation activities and the constraints faced in the promotion and implementation of the ESCAP technical cooperation programme.

321. It reaffirmed the importance of TCDC as a means of strengthening the national and collective self-reliance of developing countries and acknowledged that the primary responsibility for TCDC rested with the developing countries themselves. It noted the increasing and wide variety of TCDC activities by which the least developed, landlocked and island developing countries could learn from the more advanced developing countries. The implementation of TCDC activities, however, was not commensurate with the potential.

322. The Commission emphasized the importance of the increased commitment of human and financial resources by the developing countries for the design and implementation of TCDC activities in their countries. It was also important for developing countries to benefit from opportunities provided by other developing countries. ESCAP played a catalytic role in the promotion of TCDC activities and the mobilization of additional resources through trilateral funding or tripartite cooperation to facilitate the implementation of TCDC operational activities, particularly by the least developed, landlocked and island developing countries and the disadvantaged economies in transition. More training workshops and seminars should be implemented at regular intervals aimed at strengthening the national TCDC focal points of the least developed, landlocked and island developing countries and at sensitizing the focal points to the benefits that they could derive through more effective and greater participation in the design and implementation of TCDC activities, and through the utilization of TCDC modalities for project implementation. Donor countries and the more advanced developing countries were asked to increase their financial support to ESCAP for both promotional and operational TCDC activities.

323. The Executive Secretary informed the Commission that the total extrabudgetary resources available to ESCAP for the implementation of its technical cooperation activities in 1995 had amounted to US$ 22,374,000, a slight decrease of US$ 23,000 from the previous year's amount of US$ 22,397,000. Of the 1995 amount, US$ 9,120,000, or 40.8 per cent, had been received from sources within the United Nations system, US$ 12,330,000, or 55.1 per cent, from bilateral donor and developing members and associate members, and US$ 920,000, or 4.1 per cent, from other organizations.

324. Of the US$ 12,330,000 contributed by bilateral donors and developing members and associate members, US$ 10,620,000, or 86.1 per cent, had been received from eight developed donor countries, namely Australia, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands,

New Zealand and Sweden. Japan, with its contribution of about US$ 5,730,000, remained the largest bilateral donor to ESCAP, followed by the Netherlands, which had contributed US$ 2,040,000. Twenty-two developing members and associate members had together contributed US$ 1,710,000, or 13.9 per cent. Among them, the largest donor was the Republic of Korea, which had contributed US$ 767,864 in cash, or 44.9 per cent of the cash contributions from developing countries, followed by China, which had contributed US$ 337,260 in cash, or 19.7 per cent.

325. The generous contributions of bilateral donors and developing members and associate members had enabled the secretariat to initiate the implementation of 99 technical cooperation projects, with a financial outlay of US$ 8,180,000, under its programme of work. The remaining amount of US$ 4,150,000 had been allotted for institutional and programme support to the ESCAP regional institutions and to RNAM, the Pacific Trust Fund and ESCAP/POC.

326. In addition to cash contributions, donors and developing members had provided 372 work-months of services by experts recruited on a non-reimbursable loan basis in 1995, as compared with 221 work-months of such services received by ESCAP in 1994. The invaluable services of experts on a non-reimbursable loan basis had augmented the regular staff of the secretariat and had greatly enhanced its capability to implement its technical cooperation programme.

327. The Executive Secretary informed the Commission that the ability of ESCAP to undertake operational activities for its developing members and associate members depended on the extrabudgetary resources contributed by Governments, organizations and agencies of the United Nations and non-governmental organizations. The changing trends in resource flows for development assistance globally, the reduction in the level of ODA in real terms and the increasing pressures and competing demands for scarce development assistance resources had had an impact on the extrabudgetary resources available to ESCAP. While resource flows had been maintained at previous levels in absolute terms, the rising costs of technical cooperation and the increased needs of members and associate members owing to an expanded membership and new mandated activities had caused the resource requirements to increase considerably. In addition, the adoption of a thematic programme of work had resulted in larger and more long-term projects. To implement the ESCAP technical cooperation programme effectively, new approaches towards the utilization of donors' funding had to be adopted, such as support for multi-year projects, an increased budget ceiling for each project, early disbursement of approved funds for the implementation of technical cooperation activities and greater flexibility for the secretariat to decide on the projects to be funded by the donors.

328. The Executive Secretary drew the attention of the Commission to the financial shortfalls in institutional support funds provided by participating countries for the three regional institutions operating under the auspices of ESCAP, namely APCTT, the Regional Coordination Centre for Research and Development of Coarse Grains, Pulses, Roots and Tuber Crops in the Humid Tropics of Asia and the Pacific (CGPRT Centre) and the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP), and for the special regional project on RNAM. While SIAP had attained a substantial degree of financial stability, the difficulties in ensuring the institutional viability of the other bodies had seriously affected efforts to obtain adequate resources for the implementation of their respective programmes of work. He also drew the attention of the Commission to the issue of timely payment of intended contributions towards the institutional costs for the regional institutions and RNAM, which had remained largely unresolved.

329. The Executive Secretary drew the attention of the Commission to the suggestions of the secretariat contained in paragraphs 35-39 and 41 of document E/ESCAP/1035. Those suggestions included, *inter alia*, an increase in annual contributions by donors, participating countries, multilateral funding agencies and regional financial institutions; the establishment of new ESCAP cooperation funds by more advanced developing members and associate members; greater flexibility in the project approval process by allowing the secretariat to determine the projects to be financed from donors' annual contributions; increased contributions towards institutional and programme support of regional institutions and RNAM by the participating Governments and donor countries, with the least developed countries contributing a minimum of US$ 1,000 and other developing countries a minimum of US$ 15,000 towards institutional support; and payment of such contributions at the beginning of each calendar year.

330. The Executive Secretary expressed deep appreciation and gratitude to all donor countries, developing members and associate members, funding agencies within the United Nations system and other organizations for their generous and invaluable extrabudgetary contributions. He emphasized that, given the background detailed above, enhanced contributions from donors as well as members and associate members were essential for the implementation of a large number of activities within the approved programme of work.

331. The Commission took note of the following contributions pledged for 1996.

332. *Australia.* The representative of Australia announced that his Government would contribute A$ 400,000 towards the ESCAP extrabudgetary programme in 1996. Those funds would be used to support activities within priority areas, as agreed upon

between Australia and ESCAP. Those areas were the environment, poverty alleviation, health and drug abuse, transport and communications, and statistics. He expressed satisfaction with the mechanism of biannual programme planning consultations with the secretariat, which had contributed to improvement in the targeting and impact of activities supported by his Government. The mechanism had also contributed to improved coordination among the divisions of the secretariat in both presenting and implementing extrabudgetary project proposals. He reiterated his Government's continued support for the mechanism and hoped that it would contribute to further improvement in the implementation of the extrabudgetary programme. He indicated that, as part of its extrabudgetary contributions, Australia had agreed to continue to support a consultancy fund of US$ 100,000 for ESCAP/POC at Port Vila, which would, in part, be used to enable Australian consultants to conduct short-term activities. The fund would be replenished, as required, from Australia's extrabudgetary contributions. He reaffirmed that the Pacific Trust Fund should be used in a manner consistent with the purposes for which it had been established, which *inter alia* included financial assistance for the participation of developing Pacific island countries in the Commission sessions. He further indicated that, through the extrabudgetary programme, strong relationships had developed between ESCAP and the Australian Government's development assistance organization, AUSAID. Relations had also been fostered between ESCAP and other government departments and agencies. For example, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization's Office of Space Science and Applications had provided technical assistance and personnel exchanges with the ESCAP Regional Space Technology Applications Programme. The Department of Family Services and Health had provided A$ 50,000 towards the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002.

333. *Bangladesh*. The representative of Bangladesh announced that, although Bangladesh was a least developed country, his Government would maintain its contributions in 1996 at the same level as in 1995, as follows:

	US$
(a) APCTT	7 000
(b) CGPRT Centre	1 000
(c) SIAP	5 000
(d) RNAM	6 000

In addition, Bangladesh would contribute US$ 15,000 to the Asian and Pacific Development Centre (APDC).

334. *Brunei Darussalam*. The representative of Brunei Darussalam indicated that a contribution of US$ 5,000 would be made to SIAP in 1996. In addition, US$ 10,000 would be contributed to APDC.

335. *China*. The representative of China announced that his Government would contribute a total of US$ 337,000 and Y 750,000 in 1996, as follows:

(a) ESCAP programme of work for China-ESCAP cooperation projects	Y 750 000
(b) ESCAP programme of work for China-ESCAP cooperation projects (including US$ 40,000 for the ESCAP TCDC supplementary fund and US$ 10,000 for the Pacific Trust Fund)	US$ 150 000
(c) Regional institutions:	
APCTT	US$ 20 000
SIAP	US$ 40 000
RNAM	US$ 10 000

In addition, China would contribute US$ 50,000 to the Coordinating Committee for Coastal and Offshore Geoscience Programmes in East and Southeast Asia (CCOP), US$ 55,000 to APDC and US$ 12,000 to the Typhoon Committee.

336. *Democratic People's Republic of Korea*. The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea indicated to the secretariat that his Government would contribute W 10,000 in local currency towards the programme of work of ESCAP in 1996.

337. *France*. The representative of France announced that her Government would continue its support for and cooperation with ESCAP in 1996 at the same level as in 1995. Of that support and cooperation, approximately US$ 500,000 would be in cash for projects and for the Pacific Trust Fund. With regard to the contribution in kind in the form of experts on a non-reimbursable loan basis, seven such experts had been provided to ESCAP in 1995. The continued provision of the services of such experts would be subject to further review on a case-by-case basis, as required. She confirmed that the provision of the services of such experts for the CGPRT Centre could be continued in 1996.

338. *Germany*. The representative of Germany announced intended contributions amounting to DM 5 million (equivalent to US$ 3.4 million approximately) in 1996, comprising DM 2 million for the prolongation of the project on regional fertilizer distribution and marketing assistance programme and DM 3 million for the prolongation of the support to APCTT.

339. *India*. The representative of India announced his Government's intention to contribute the following:

		US$
(a)	APCTT	100 000 (in national currency)
(b)	CGPRT Centre	5 000
(c)	SIAP	10 000
(d)	RNAM	15 000

The intended contributions for APCTT would be in addition to the host facilities being provided to the Centre in New Delhi. In addition, his Government would contribute US$ 66,000 to APDC for 1996 as against US$ 55,000 in the past.

340. *Indonesia*. The representative of Indonesia announced that his Government would make the following contributions:

(a)	APCTT	US$ 15 000
(b)	CGPRT Centre	Rp 280 430 000
(c)	SIAP	US$ 40 000
(d)	RNAM	US$ 15 000
(e)	Pacific Trust Fund	US$ 5 000

In addition, Indonesia would contribute US$ 47,300 to APDC and US$ 50,000 to CCOP.

341. *Islamic Republic of Iran*. The representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran announced that his Government would contribute US$ 15,000 to the ESCAP programme of work in 1996.

342. *Japan*. The representative of Japan announced that, subject to parliamentary approval of the national budget, his Government would continue to provide experts on a non-reimbursable loan basis through the Japan International Cooperation Agency and to accept trainees through SIAP. Under the same condition, it would also contribute approximately US$ 5.5 million in cash, which would include its contributions to the Japan-ESCAP Cooperation Fund, SIAP, the CGPRT Centre and the allocation of US$ 1 million for the Indo-China Development Forum project. It would also make an in-kind contribution of experts to SIAP, on a long-term, non-reimbursable loan basis, which would amount to approximately US$ 2.6 million. He requested that the secretariat continue its efforts to pursue administrative reform in implementing various projects.

343. *Lao People's Democratic Republic*. The representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic indicated that his Government would contribute US$ 1,000 to the programme of work of ESCAP in 1996.

344. *Macau*. The representative of Macau announced that her Government would contribute US$ 17,000 to SIAP in 1996. In addition, it would contribute US$ 10,000 to APDC and US$ 12,000 to the Typhoon Committee.

345. *Malaysia*. The representative of Malaysia announced the following intended contributions:

		US$
(a)	APCTT	10 000
(b)	SIAP	10 000
(c)	Pacific Trust Fund	1 000

In addition, Malaysia would contribute US$ 46,200 (as annual contribution) and 440,000 Malaysian ringgits (as annual grant), approximately equivalent to US$ 176,000, to APDC.

346. *Myanmar*. The representative of Myanmar announced that his Government would contribute US$ 2,000 to the programme of work of ESCAP, US$ 2,000 to the CGPRT Centre and US$ 1,000 to SIAP.

347. *Nepal*. The representative of Nepal announced that, although Nepal was a least developed country, his Government intended to make the following contributions:

		US$
(a)	ESCAP programme of work	2 492
(b)	APCTT	1 000
(c)	CGPRT Centre	500
(d)	SIAP	1 000

In addition, his Government would contribute US$ 5,000 to APDC.

348. *Netherlands*. The representative of the Netherlands announced that his Government would contribute 3 million guilders (approximately equivalent to US$ 2 million) to ESCAP in 1997, which would represent the same level as in 1996. The contributions had been given to ESCAP through the structural component agreement between the Netherlands and ESCAP. For 1996, the contributions had been used to finance about 40 projects with a main focus on poverty alleviation, environmentally sound and sustainable development, and women in development. Those specific focuses would be maintained in the future, unless otherwise indicated to the secretariat.

349. *New Caledonia*. The representative of New Caledonia announced that his Government would contribute FCFP 500,000, equivalent to US$ 5,000 approximately, to the Pacific Trust Fund in 1996.

350. *Pakistan*. The representative of Pakistan announced the following intended contributions:

		US$
(a)	APCTT	5 000
(b)	SIAP	15 000
(c)	RNAM	12 000

In addition, Pakistan would contribute US$ 33,000 to APDC and US$ 14,420 to the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity.

351. *Palau.* The representative of Palau explained that his Government viewed technical cooperation activities as being fundamental to the collective socio-economic development of the region. Being a small developing and recipient island country, it acknowledged with appreciation the ability and willingness of member countries which had contributed towards those very meaningful programmes of ESCAP.

352. *Papua New Guinea.* The representative of Papua New Guinea announced the following contributions for 1996:

	US$
(a) CGPRT Centre	10 000
(b) Pacific Trust Fund	30 000
(c) ESCAP programme of work	10 000

353. *Philippines.* The representative of the Philippines announced the following contributions:

	US$
(a) APCTT	4 500
(b) CGPRT Centre	5 600
(c) SIAP	11 300
(d) RNAM	6 500

In addition, the Government pledged to contribute US$ 28,000 to CCOP and US$ 71,000 to APDC.

354. *Republic of Korea.* The representative of the Republic of Korea announced that his Government would increase its contribution to the Republic of Korea-ESCAP Cooperation Fund by 40 per cent from US$ 500,000 to US$ 700,000. He also reaffirmed his Government's strong support for the technical cooperation activities of ESCAP. His Government had provided the services of nine experts to ESCAP in 1995 on a non-reimbursable loan basis. Specifically, the following intended contributions were announced:

	US$
(a) Republic of Korea-ESCAP Cooperation Fund	700 000
(b) APCTT	15 000
(c) CGPRT Centre	20 000
(d) SIAP	40 000

In addition, his Government would contribute US$ 100,000 to APDC and US$ 60,000 to CCOP.

355. *Russian Federation.* The representative of the Russian Federation announced that his Government's in-kind contribution to ESCAP activities in 1995 had been mainly concentrated on providing advanced technologies to APCTT. It was expected that such provision would continue in 1996. As a regional member of ESCAP, the Russian Federation would consider strengthening its assistance to ESCAP in other forms.

356. *Singapore.* The representative of Singapore announced the following intended contributions for 1996:

	US$
(a) SIAP	5 000
(b) ESCAP programme of work	5 000

357. *Sri Lanka.* The representative of Sri Lanka announced the following contributions:

	US$
(a) APCTT	5 000
(b) CGPRT Centre	10 000
(c) SIAP	5 000

In addition, Sri Lanka would contribute US$ 27,500 to APDC. The Government would advise the secretariat of its intended contributions to RNAM in due course.

358. *Thailand.* The representative of Thailand announced the following contributions:

	US$
(a) APCTT	15 000
(b) CGPRT Centre	30 000
(c) SIAP	13 000
(d) RNAM	15 000
(e) Pacific Trust Fund	1 000
(f) Trust fund for the participation of the disadvantaged economies in transition and Mongolia	2 000

In addition, Thailand would contribute US$ 40,000 to APDC, US$ 40,000 to CCOP and US$ 12,000 to the Typhoon Committee in 1996.

359. *United States of America.* The representative of the United States explained that, while as a general rule his Government had not been providing assistance outside its annual contributions to the regular budget of the United Nations, his Government strongly supported the goals and objectives of ESCAP and welcomed any extrabudgetary contributions to achieve them.

360. *Vanuatu.* The representative of Vanuatu announced that his Government would contribute US$ 1,000 to the Pacific Trust Fund in 1996.

361. *Viet Nam.* The representative of Viet Nam announced that his Government would contribute US$ 5,000 to the ESCAP programme of work in 1996. It would advise the secretariat later regarding its intended contributions to APCTT, the CGPRT Centre, RNAM and APDC.

362. The total pledges of contributions to ESCAP for 1996 made by 27 members and associate members amounted to approximately US$ 17,450,000, comprising US$ 10,450,000 in cash and an estimated US$ 7 million in kind. The amounts did not include contributions announced for CCOP, APDC and the Typhoon Committee.

363. The Commission noted that the total pledges mentioned above did not include possible contributions from other member and donor countries which had made no announcement of intended contributions at the current session, or the value of several unquantified contributions pledged. In addition, extrabudgetary resources to be received from UNDP, UNFPA, other agencies of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations for ESCAP-executed projects were not reflected in the total pledges.

364. The Commission endorsed the suggestions of the secretariat for a fuller implementation of ESCAP technical cooperation activities as well as the smooth operation of the Commission's regional institutions and RNAM.

365. The Executive Secretary expressed appreciation to members, associate members and donor countries for the intended contributions announced at the current session. Such pledges indeed symbolized their commitment to and support for the goals and priorities of ESCAP. He reiterated the determination of the secretariat to make the most cost-effective use of those contributions for the benefit of the developing members and associate members of ESCAP.

Strengthening inter-organizational cooperation in the promotion of economic and social development in the region

366. The Commission had before it document E/ESCAP/1036. The Executive Secretary informed the Commission that the Secretary-General was focusing on an integrated approach to programme implementation and increased inter-organizational cooperation. He recalled that, at the recent series of global conferences, emphasis had been placed on development on a broad front by adopting holistic approaches where solutions were sought through integrated programmes covering several fields of specialization. Prevailing resource constraints also called for the strengthening of inter-agency cooperation for more cost-effective programme implementation. At its third session, in February 1996, the Regional Inter-agency Committee for Asia and the Pacific (RICAP) had identified modalities to strengthen cooperation through common funding of an integrated set of activities and involvement of non-governmental organizations as well as interested Governments. The Executive Secretary emphasized that a number of technical cooperation activities undertaken by ESCAP in collaboration with United Nations specialized agencies and bodies had developed into long-standing arrangements, while the emergence of the Central Asian republics had recently led to expanded collaboration between ESCAP and ECE. Collaboration with non-governmental organizations had been growing, which had enhanced programme delivery rates and had helped to ensure that activities were better targeted, while also involving the participation of beneficiaries in local communities. The Executive Secretary noted that, given the vast size of the region, subregions were emerging as building blocks of regional cooperation through regular consultative arrangements with subregional organizations.

367. The Commission expressed satisfaction with efforts made towards strengthening inter-organizational cooperation. Two developments were highlighted: (a) the establishment of RICAP and its subcommittees; and (b) continued progress in promoting cooperation through RICAP. It felt that RICAP had demonstrated that its work involved concrete issues and that it would facilitate communication, exchange of information and efficient use of resources. It was suggested that a detailed comparative analysis of the work programmes of associated agencies and organizations would assist in developing mutually complementary programmes.

368. The Commission recognized the importance of cooperation between ESCAP and ECE in rendering technical assistance to those of their respective members with economies in transition. It therefore recommended continued collaboration and coordination between ESCAP and ECE in order to assist the countries concerned. The Commission noted with satisfaction the existing cooperation between the secretariat and subregional organizations. It expressed the hope that the forthcoming third meeting with subregional organizations in Tehran would give practical shape to that cooperation.

369. The Commission noted that the International Social Security Association had contributed to social and economic development programmes of countries with widely varying needs and pressures. The Association was currently re-establishing its Asia-Pacific regional office, which should be included in the regional cooperation mechanism.

370. The Commission observed that document E/ESCAP/1036, in describing a series of inter-organizational links, had focused on the process without any indication of the outcome of such links. It pointed out that it was necessary to analyse the outcome of extensive inter-organizational cooperation so that the usefulness of institutional arrangements could be ascertained. Inter-organizational cooperation in providing technical assistance to the Pacific island economies was recommended in order to increase the quality of such assistance. The Commission recognized that prevailing resource constraints had induced greater inter-agency cooperation, which should promote efficiency. However, in order to realize savings, more money might initially be required to enable inter-organizational cooperation to be streamlined.

371. The Commission proposed that RICAP should liaise with ACPR to ensure that the views of member States were taken into consideration when decisions were taken by RICAP. It recognized that no significant area of cooperation with UNIDO had emerged. It identified trade and investment, transport and communications, human resources development and energy as priority areas for inter-agency cooperation.

Reports of regional intergovernmental bodies

Asian and Pacific Development Centre

372. The Commission had before it the report of APDC, transmitted for information under a note by the secretariat (E/ESCAP/1037).

373. The Director of the Centre reported that 1995 had been a significant year in that it marked the transition from phase V (1991-1994) to phase VI (1995-1998) of the programme of work of the Centre. Established in 1980, the Centre had become a leading institution of regional expertise. In 1995, it had undertaken 27 research and training activities involving over 200 participants from 27 countries. It had issued seven publications in the fields of energy, gender, economic management, public administration and sustainable development.

374. The institutional fund of the Centre for 1995 totalled US$ 2,914,480, an increase of 2.8 per cent over that of the preceding year. One third of the institutional fund came from voluntary contributions by member Governments; in 1994 that figure had been one quarter. The grant of the host Government showed a slight increase, while the balance brought forward was 38.3 per cent of the total receipt as compared with 40 per cent in 1994. The total expenditure for 1995, excluding the balance carried forward, was US$ 1,912,557 compared with US$ 1,720,103 for 1994. That represented an expenditure increase of 11.2 per cent during the period 1994-1995. The 1995 institutional budget showed a deficit of US$ 114,147 in contrast to a small surplus in 1994. As a consequence, the reserve fund available as of 31 December 1995 was US$ 1,001,923 or 10.3 per cent less than in the preceding year.

375. The Director noted with gratitude the support provided by member countries and invited other member countries of ESCAP to join the Centre as active partners in the development of the Asian and Pacific region.

376. A number of delegations remarked on the important role played by APDC in development research and training, in conformity with the needs of the region. It was suggested that APDC could play a useful role as a think-tank for ESCAP on developmental subjects and could be associated with meetings such as the Steering Group of the Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation.

377. Member countries which declared their intention to increase their annual contribution to the Centre from their current levels were India (to a total of US$ 66,000, an increase of 20 per cent over the previous year), Nepal (to a total of US$ 5,000, an increase of 67 per cent) and Thailand (to a total of US$ 40,000, an increase of 10 per cent).

Coordinating Committee for Coastal and Offshore Geoscience Programmes in East and Southeast Asia

378. The Commission had before it the report of CCOP, transmitted for information under a note by the secretariat (E/ESCAP/1038).

379. During the past year, CCOP had continued to make significant progress in project activities in the three main sectors of energy, minerals and coastal zones. In the energy sector, projects related to resource data management and dynamic basin analyses were initiated. In the minerals sector, efforts were directed towards the application of computer technology to regional map compilation and the interpretation of geoscientific data. In the coastal zone sector, the Programme on Geoscience for Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Development of Southeast and East Asian Coastal Zones (COASTPLAN) was launched in 1995.

380. The Commission noted with appreciation the strong commitment of CCOP member countries and the support of cooperating countries and relevant organizations. It also noted that an increase in such commitments was needed in order to enhance CCOP activities. It requested CCOP to maintain close cooperation with ESCAP, to strengthen inter-agency coordination in formulating and implementing the programme of work, with the main objectives of avoiding duplication of effort and effectively utilizing available resources.

381. The Commission expressed appreciation to Canada, Denmark, France, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and to the relevant cooperating organizations, for extending assistance to the programme areas concerning coastal and energy management, and the development of mineral resources.

Mekong River Commission

382. The Commission had before it the report of the Mekong River Commission which was presented for information under a note by the secretariat (E/ESCAP/1039).

383. The Commission noted the progress on major activities in the implementation of the Agreement on the Cooperation for the Sustainable Development of the Mekong River Basin, signed on 5 April 1995 by the four lower Mekong basin countries, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Thailand and Viet Nam. The Agreement established the Mekong River Commission (MRC) to replace the Interim Mekong Committee, which had been established under the umbrella of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (the forerunner of ESCAP) in 1957.

384. The Commission was informed that some of the important achievements of MRC included the establishment of three permanent bodies: the Council at ministerial/cabinet level, the Joint Committee at head of department level and the Secretariat, which was the technical and administrative arm of MRC. In addition, three permanent subcommittees were established: for the formulation of the Mekong Basin development plan (to establish basin development strategies and priorities for joint projects and programmes); for the establishment of rules for water utilization and inter-basin diversion (to provide further technical details for the implementation of the principles reached under the Agreement), and to

establish the headquarters and related headquarters and operational agreements. In addition, a task force was formed for the establishment and operation of a donor consultative group (to mobilize resources to ensure the financial viability of MRC and its Secretariat). MRC also held two exploratory meetings with the upper Mekong basin riparian country, Myanmar, and China.

385. The Commission noted that MRC had strengthened its relationship with other international organizations and subregional development efforts, such as the Upper Mekong Quadrangle Economic Zone, the Greater Mekong subregional initiatives of ADB, the Indo-China Comprehensive Development Forum and the subregional activities of ESCAP, UNDP, UNEP and the World Bank. MRC had also established contact with other river basin commissions to exchange experience, including that for the Murray-Darling River basin and the Aral Sea basin. Contact with the Aral Sea basin countries was made through ESCAP.

386. The Commission was also provided with brief information on the programme of work of the MRC Secretariat in 1995, which covered 79 projects, including 46 ongoing projects being supported by 17 donors. New donor commitments in 1995 had amounted to US$ 27 million. MRC expressed its appreciation to UNDP, ESCAP and the donor community for the continuing and consistent support and assistance provided to it since the establishment of the Mekong Committee.

387. The Commission was informed that the MRC work programme for 1996 would include 97 projects, requiring US$ 217 million, and that MRC was undertaking a continuous shift from national to basinwide/regional priorities in carrying out its work.

388. It noted with satisfaction that the current members of MRC were pleased with the establishment and activities of MRC and that they expected that China and Myanmar would eventually join MRC. The Commission was pleased to be informed that China accorded great importance to the goals and activities of MRC and that MRC had established a formal dialogue mechanism with China and Myanmar.

389. The Commission expressed satisfaction that the Mekong cooperation initiative, which had been a "vision" of ESCAP for many years, was becoming a reality. That cooperation would not only contribute to poverty alleviation and improvement in the standard of living of the peoples of the subregion, but would also be a confidence-building measure contributing towards permanent peace and prosperity in the area. The Commission reiterated its support for the work of MRC.

390. The Commission was pleased to note the continuing support of MRC by the donor countries and agencies and expressed the hope that such assistance would continue and increase.

Typhoon Committee

391. The Commission had before it the report of the Typhoon Committee transmitted under a note by the secretariat (E/ESCAP/1040), which was introduced by the representative of the Committee. The Commission noted with appreciation the progress achieved by the Committee in 1995, including important work undertaken in the meteorological and hydrological components, disaster prevention and preparedness, training and research. It also took note of the work plan of the Committee for 1996.

392. The Commission noted the appreciation expressed by the Typhoon Committee for the support provided by ESCAP to various activities of the Committee, especially those related to comprehensive flood loss prevention, training and advisory services to the Committee members. It also noted the valuable contribution of the World Meteorological Organization to the work of the Typhoon Committee over the years.

393. The Commission expressed appreciation to the Typhoon Committee for its valuable contribution to increased disaster reduction and preparedness levels in vulnerable countries in the region. Typhoon monitoring, forecasting and dissemination of information on typhoons, as well as hydrological and disaster prevention measures, had contributed significantly to the mitigation of the effects of typhoons.

394. The Commission was pleased to note the growing interest in the work of the Typhoon Committee, as was indicated by the attendance of Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia and Singapore at its annual session in 1995. China informed the Commission of its plan to host a study tour for the typhoon forecasting experts of the Committee in China in 1996 and to cover the local costs for the participants.

395. The Commission took note of the valuable contribution and continuous support of Japan for the work of the Committee, especially for the forecasting services of the Regional Specialized Meteorological Centre in Tokyo. Japan considered that it was necessary for the Committee to review and strengthen its activities and secretariat system and it urged that those matters be considered at the next board meeting.

396. The Commission noted that the Committee planned to launch activities on flood risk analysis and mapping as an important component of disaster prevention and preparedness measures and expressed its support for those activities.

397. It urged UNDP and other donors to provide support for the work of the Typhoon Committee and directed the ESCAP secretariat to continue to provide substantive support to the Committee within the framework of its own programme of work.

Activities of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission

398. The Commission considered and endorsed documents E/ESCAP/1041 and Add.1, containing the report of the Advisory Committee, which was presented by the representative of the Philippines as the rapporteur of ACPR.

399. Since the fifty-first session of the Commission, ACPR had held 10 regular and 2 informal sessions, at which it had considered, among other issues, the following:

(a) Commission sessions:

  (i) Review of the fifty-first session;

  (ii) Guidelines for the conduct of sessions (annexed to E/ESCAP/1041);

  (iii) Preparations for the fifty-second and fifty-third sessions, including possible theme topics for the fifty-third session, and preparations for the review mandated by Commission resolution 48/2 of 23 April 1992;

(b) Preparations for and review of the intergovernmental meetings held during the period;

(c) Improvement in the effectiveness in the functioning of the Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation in relation to its Steering Group;

(d) Implementation of Commission resolutions;

(e) Implementation of the programme of work of the biennium 1994-1995 and programme changes for the biennium 1996-1997; the draft medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001; the calendar of meetings, April 1996-March 1997; and the impact of the current financial crisis on the capacity of the secretariat to implement the programme.

400. The Commission noted that ACPR provided a unique forum for regular consultations and exchanges of information between the members and the secretariat. Among the significant accomplishments that it highlighted were the Advisory Committee's consideration of the rationalization of the work of the Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation in relation to its Steering Group and its recommendation that the Steering Group should meet only once a year, with four-month intervals to separate the meetings of the Steering Group, the Committee and the Commission. It also highlighted the guidelines for the conduct of Commission sessions. The guidelines were being implemented on a trial basis at the current session.

401. The Commission endorsed the decision of ACPR to involve itself fully in the review process mandated by Commission resolution 48/2; it was considering a resolution at its current session towards that end. One delegation requested that the Executive Secretary consult ACPR before finalizing the in-house portion of the review. Another delegation pointed out that, whatever changes were to be proposed as the result of the review, the priority accorded to the needs of the least developed, landlocked and island developing countries and the disadvantaged economies in transition should not be reduced. At one of its informal sessions ACPR had been briefed on early findings of a review of the work programmes of the United Nations regional commissions and UNCTAD by a consultant, Mr B. Molitor; several delegations expressed their interest in receiving a copy of the report. The secretariat replied that they would be informed of the progress of that review.

Date, venue and any other subject pertaining to the fifty-third session of the Commission

402. The Commission had before it document E/ESCAP/1042. It decided that its fifty-third session would be held at Bangkok in March or April 1997 and took note of the preference expressed by the delegation of Indonesia for April. The Executive Secretary, in consultation with the member Governments and the Chairperson, would determine the exact dates of the session and inform the members and associate members of the Commission accordingly. The Commission requested the Executive Secretary to ensure, if possible, that the dates would not overlap with the sessions of other organizations such as ECE.

403. As decided by ACPR at its two hundred and third session, the Working Group on Draft Resolutions had discussed the selection of a theme topic for the next session of the Commission. The Working Group recommended that the theme topic should be "Asia and the Pacific into the twenty-first century: opportunities and challenges for ESCAP" . The Working Group had noted that, during 1996, ESCAP would be focusing its attention on (a) the review of the conference structure of the Commission, including its thematic priorities and its subsidiary structure, as mandated in Commission resolution 48/2 of 23 April 1992, as well as the ongoing exercise on the reform of the United Nations; (b) a regional intergovernmental meeting preparatory to the fifty-third session to discuss the review; and (c) a commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of ESCAP. It had thus taken into account the fact that the resources of the secretariat would be fully utilized.

404. The Commission endorsed the recommendation of the Working Group. It noted the importance of close coordination between the secretariat and the organizer of the proposed commemoration to promote as wide a representation as possible in those related events, including the participation of representatives of the members and associate members as well as eminent experts in various fields.

Adoption of the report of the Commission

405. The present report was adopted by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific at the 13th meeting of its fifty-second session on 24 April 1996.

Chapter IV

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE COMMISSION AT ITS FIFTY-SECOND SESSION

52/1. Preparation for the review of the conference structure of the Commission[1]

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

Recalling its resolutions 143 (XXX) of 5 April 1974, 210 (XXXVI) of 29 March 1980, 262 (XLIII) of 30 April 1987 and 47/3 of 10 April 1991 concerning the conference structure of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

Recalling also its resolution 48/2 of 23 April 1992 on restructuring the conference structure of the Commission, in particular its decision "to review the conference structure of the Commission, including its thematic priorities and its subsidiary structure, no later than at the fifty-third session of the Commission",

Recognizing the increased responsibilities of the Commission, which comprises a geographical area with 62 per cent of the world's population and with many developing members and associate members, among which are least developed, landlocked and island developing economies and disadvantaged economies in transition with special needs,

Recognizing also the comparative advantage of the Commission in the exercise of its role as the main general economic and social development centre of the United Nations system for the Asian and Pacific region,

Mindful of the desire of members and associate members of the Commission to maximize the effectiveness of its conference structure,

Mindful also of the desire of the General Assembly for further reform towards a more efficient organization, and of the financial constraints faced by the United Nations,

1. *Acknowledges* the need for a comprehensive and thorough preparation for the review of the conference structure of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific which is to be undertaken at its fifty-third session and which provides a valuable opportunity to reassess the Commission's orientation of work and output against the needs and priorities of the region while keeping in view the comparative advantage of the Commission;

2. *Welcomes* the preparations initiated by the Executive Secretary to facilitate the comprehensive review by the Commission of its conference structure, including the thematic approach and priorities in relation to the programme of work of the Commission while at the same time keeping in view the resources available to it, including any possibility of new sources of funding;

3. *Requests* the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission to undertake an independent review of the conference structure of the Commission which would take into account the progress made in the preparatory exercise referred to in paragraph 2 above and which would provide the Advisory Committee's own recommendations in this regard;

4. *Requests* the Executive Secretary:

(a) To consult the Advisory Committee, as appropriate, in undertaking the preparatory exercise referred to in paragraph 2 above;

(b) To convene a regional preparatory meeting in Bangkok by February 1997 to discuss, *inter alia*, the outcome of the secretariat's preparatory exercise and the Advisory Committee's recommendations, in preparation for the review of the conference structure of the Commission, and to submit his report to the Commission at its fifty-third session.

13th meeting
24 April 1996

52/2. Shanghai symposium to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of ESCAP[2]

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

Noting that the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific at Shanghai, China, will fall in 1997,

Acknowledging the impressive contribution of ESCAP, since its founding, to the social and economic development of its members and associate members and the positive role that it has played in fostering economic and social cooperation in the Asian and Pacific region,

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[1] See para. 71 above.

[2] See para. 319 above.

Recognizing the impressive economic and social progress that has been achieved by members and associate members during the last five decades and the vastly expanded opportunities and scope for regionwide development cooperation,

Taking note with appreciation of the generous offer of the Government of China to host a three-day symposium in Shanghai on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of ESCAP,

1. *Decides* to hold a symposium on "Development challenges and opportunities for Asia and the Pacific in the twenty-first century and the role of ESCAP";

2. *Urges* all members and associate members to extend full cooperation in the preparations for and active participation in the symposium to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of ESCAP to ensure its success;

3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to cooperate closely with the Government of China in the organization of the symposium.

13th meeting
24 April 1996

52/3. Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women[5]

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

Welcoming the successful outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,

Noting that the Platform for Action recommends that regional commissions should promote and assist the pertinent national institutions in monitoring and implementing the global Platform for Action within their mandates and that that should be done in coordination with the implementation of the respective regional platforms or plans of action,

Noting also that the Platform for Action recommends that regional commissions should mainstream women's issues and gender perspectives and should also consider the establishment of mechanisms and processes to ensure the implementation and monitoring of the Platform for Action and the regional platforms and plans of action,

Bearing in mind its resolution 51/7 of 1 May 1995 on the implementation of the Jakarta Declaration and Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women in Asia and the Pacific, in which the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to support the integration of regional inputs, as contained in the Jakarta Declaration and Plan of Action, into the global platform for action at the Fourth World Conference on Women,

Noting with satisfaction the establishment of the Subcommittee on the Advancement of Women in Asia and the Pacific of the Regional Inter-agency Committee for Asia and the Pacific in response to Commission resolution 51/7,

Cognizant of General Assembly resolution 50/203 of 22 December 1995 on the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and other relevant General Assembly resolutions,

Recalling the important role played by regional preparatory conferences in the preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women and the plans of action adopted that had served as essential inputs to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and inputs provided to other international conferences by regional preparatory conferences such as the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Conference in Preparation for the World Summit for Social Development, held in Manila in October 1994,

Reaffirming the crucial role that women play in all areas of economic and social development, including in the alleviation and eradication of poverty, and reiterating that much progress needs to be made to advance the status of women and enhance their participation in the development of the Asian and Pacific region,

Recognizing the important role of women in economic and social development as reflected in recent international conferences, including the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held at Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the World Conference on Human Rights, held at Vienna in 1993, the International Conference on Population and Development, held at Cairo in 1994 and the World Summit for Social Development, held at Copenhagen in 1995,

1. *Urges* all members and associate members to ensure full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in coordination with the implementation of the Jakarta Declaration and Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women in Asia and the Pacific:

(a) By developing implementation strategies or plans of action for the Platform for Action preferably by the end of 1996, which should be comprehensive, have time-bound targets and benchmarks for monitoring, and include proposals for allocating or reallocating resources for implementation;

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[5] See para. 181 above.

(b) By strengthening national machineries for the advancement of women to enhance their effectiveness in promoting mainstreaming of gender concerns into policy formulation and planning for national development;

(c) By promoting measures to alleviate and eradicate the feminization of poverty which was recognized as a critical area of concern in the Jakarta Declaration and Plan of Action and in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action;

(d) By promoting active support and community participation at all levels and of all concerned partners in civil society, including non-governmental organizations;

2. *Urges also* all donor countries, local and national governments, the private sector, funding agencies and regional and international financial institutions to assist developing countries, particularly the least developed, landlocked and island developing economies and the disadvantaged economies in transition, in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Jakarta Declaration and Plan of Action;

3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary:

(a) To provide support to national efforts, as required, for the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in coordination with the Jakarta Declaration and Plan of Action;

(b) To mainstream women's issues and gender perspectives into the Commission's programme of work and to promote intersectoral collaboration;

(c) To continue to play a coordinating role through the Regional Inter-agency Committee for Asia and the Pacific and its Subcommittee on the Advancement of Women in Asia and the Pacific to ensure inter-agency cooperation and collaboration in the region, and to cooperate with subregional organizations and relevant regional institutions in Asia and the Pacific;

(d) To urge developing countries in the Asian and Pacific region to contribute resources, financial and/or technical expertise within the framework of technical cooperation among developing countries;

(e) To conduct a regional review and follow-up of the Jakarta Declaration and Plan of Action to be utilized as inputs for the review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action;

4. *Also requests* the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at its fifty-third session on the implementation of the present resolution.

13th meeting
24 April 1996

52/4. Promoting human resources development among youth in Asia and the Pacific[4]

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 50/81 of 14 December 1995, in which the Assembly adopted the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond,

Recalling also Commission resolution 50/7 of 13 April 1994, in which the Commission adopted the Jakarta Plan of Action on Human Resources Development in the ESCAP Region, as revised in 1994,

Bearing in mind that youth constitute a substantial portion of the region's population, that their productive skills and constructive social participation will determine the pace and pattern of the region's further progress and that their human resources development therefore requires priority attention,

Expressing appreciation to the Governments of Japan and the Netherlands, as well as to the Christian Conference of Asia, for their financial support of the activities of the Commission to promote human resources development among youth,

Welcoming the offer of the Government of China to host a regional meeting of senior officials in 1996 to consider the means of launching the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond in Asia and the Pacific,

1. *Calls upon* members and associate members to promote human resources development among youth in Asia and the Pacific by integrating the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond into their youth policies, plans and programmes;

2. *Urges* donor Governments and agencies to provide technical and financial resources in support of the regional implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth;

3. *Invites* concerned non-governmental organizations and private enterprises to collaborate with Governments, as well as with the Commission, in promoting human resources development among youth in Asia and the Pacific;

4. *Requests* the Executive Secretary:

(a) To convene a regional meeting of senior officials in 1996, within available resources, to consider the means of promoting human resources development among youth through the implementation in Asia and the Pacific of the World Programme of Action for Youth;

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[4] See para. 186 above.

(b) To prepare, as an input to that regional meeting, a comprehensive survey of the youth situation and human resources development policies, plans and programmes for youth in Asia and the Pacific;

(c) To provide advisory services to members and associate members in the formulation of their policies, plans and programmes to enhance youth skills and promote youth participation in development;

(d) To conduct a series of training activities directed at youth work personnel to enhance youth skills for productive employment and youth participation in community development;

(e) To assist members and associate members, where necessary, beginning with the countries of Indo-China, in designing their youth policy frameworks and contributing to the implementation of those policy frameworks, taking into account the resources available;

(f) To prepare a report on the implementation of the present resolution for consideration by the Commission at its fifty-fourth session.

13th meeting
24 April 1996

52/5. Regional cooperation in response to the spread and consequences of the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome in the Asian and Pacific region[5]

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

Expressing concern over the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) epidemic in Asia and the Pacific,

Recognizing the profound adverse effects of that epidemic on the economic and social development of the region,

Recalling Economic and Social Council resolutions 1994/24 of 26 July 1994 and 1995/2 of 3 July 1995 on the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS,

Recalling also Commission resolution 49/9 of 29 April 1993 on the eradication of preventable diseases in the Asian and Pacific region as a component of social and economic development, and resolution 51/10 of 1 May 1995 on regional cooperation for the eradication of the demand for drugs subject to abuse and related problems,

Recalling further that the Agenda for Action on Social Development in the ESCAP Region, endorsed by the Commission in its resolution 51/4 of 1 May 1995, identifies the prevention of HIV/AIDS as a major social issue in this region, and noting that its causes and consequences must be considered within the broader economic and social context,

Convinced that the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Asia and Pacific must be addressed at the regional level because of the need to develop a comprehensive and coordinated regional prevention strategy to counter the widespread transmission of the virus across national borders,

Recognizing that effective HIV/AIDS prevention strategies need to be based on up-to-date area-specific information, and that specific strategies are required for HIV/AIDS prevention, including intercountry coordination and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms between countries with common borders,

Recalling the initiatives taken by ESCAP to promote regional cooperation for the prevention of HIV/AIDS, particularly its activities on the development of community-based approaches and cross-border collaboration for HIV/AIDS risk reduction related to drug abuse such as that which resulted in the Kunming Communiqué on Cross-border Collaboration for Drug Demand Reduction and HIV/AIDS Prevention,

1. *Urges* all members and associate members of the Commission to accord high priority to the development and implementation of effective policies, programmes and strategies for the prevention of the spread of the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS), with emphasis on community-based action and cross-border collaboration between those countries whose border areas are particularly affected;

2. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to undertake further initiatives, subject to the availability of resources and in collaboration with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and other concerned United Nations bodies and agencies and subregional intergovernmental organizations, to promote regional cooperation to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, including the development of area-specific information systems and of effective community-based strategies for HIV/AIDS prevention, and the establishment of mechanisms for cross-border collaboration;

3. *Also requests* the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at its fifty-third session on the implementation of the present resolution and on proposed follow-up measures.

13th meeting
24 April 1996

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[5] See para. 183 above.

52/6. Promotion of environmentally sound and healthy cities[6]

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

Recalling its resolution 46/2 of 13 June 1990 on urbanization strategies in the ESCAP region — towards environmentally sound and sustainable development and management of urban areas,

Recognizing the importance of the Regional Action Plan on Urbanization adopted by the Ministerial Conference on Urbanization in Asia and the Pacific in November 1993,

Recognizing also the Declaration on Healthy Cities in Asia and the Pacific adopted by the Regional Seminar on the Promotion of Environmentally Sound and Healthy Cities in January 1996,

Deeply concerned over the health of millions of people living in the cities in the Asian and Pacific region who are seriously affected by lack of clean water and shelter, overcrowding, inadequate waste disposal, hazardous working conditions and polluted air,

Mindful of the activities being undertaken by the Commission, in close collaboration with the World Health Organization, the Regional Network of Local Authorities for the Management of Human Settlements, known as CITYNET, the Urban Management Programme for Asia and the Pacific of the United Nations Development Programme, the Municipal Environment Cooperation Programme sponsored by the Commission of the European Communities, and other organizations in the promotion of the "Healthy Cities" concept in the region,

Recognizing the fact that social development will be enhanced by people having healthy living and working environments, which is also the foundation for economic growth,

Recognizing also the importance of the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) to be held in Istanbul, Turkey, from 3 to 14 June 1996, and mindful of the concerns for urban health expressed in the draft global plan of action to be considered at Habitat II,

1. *Urges* all members and associate members to accord high priority to promoting environmentally sound and healthy cities in their overall socio-economic development and to allocate adequate resources for this purpose;

2. *Requests* United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and other organizations involved in this area to intensify their efforts towards environmentally sound and healthy cities;

3. *Requests* all concerned donor countries, donor agencies and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to provide financial and technical support for the promotion of environmentally sound and healthy cities in Asia and the Pacific.

13th meeting
24 April 1996

52/7. Transfer of environmentally sound technology[7]

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

Recognizing that the availability of scientific and technological information and access to and transfer of environmentally sound technology are essential requirements for sustainable development in the Asian and Pacific region,

Recalling chapter 34 of Agenda 21 on the transfer of environmentally sound technology, cooperation and capacity-building,

Recalling also chapter 38 of Agenda 21 on international institutional arrangements and, in particular, the role of the regional commissions in regional and subregional cooperation and implementation,

Bearing in mind Commission resolution 50/9 of 13 April 1994 on the implementation of the Action Programme for Regional Economic Cooperation in Investment-related Technology Transfer and, in particular, the section in the Action Programme on the promotion of the flow of new and clean technologies,

1. *Requests* the Executive Secretary:

(a) To prepare an itemized progress report on concrete measures taken by members and associate members with respect to their commitments undertaken pursuant to chapter 34 of Agenda 21;

(b) To prepare and make available to members and associate members, in full collaboration with the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology within the context of its project on the Mechanism for Exchange of Technology Information and other relevant sources, including the United Nations Environment Programme, the International Cleaner Production Information Clearinghouse and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, an inventory of environmentally sound technologies appropriate to selected industrial sectors in the Asian and Pacific region, which would also include relevant information on the elaboration of the terms under which such transfers could take place;

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[6] See para. 154 above.

[7] See para. 156 above.

(c) To submit the documents referred to in subparagraphs (a) and (b) above to the Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development at its fifth session, to be held in 1998;

(d) To continue to provide advice to improve the operational modalities for the effective transfer of environmentally sound technology to the developing countries of the Asian and Pacific region;

(e) To promote the development of endogenous technological capacities and requisite technology in the developing countries of the Asian and Pacific region relevant to the objectives of chapter 34 of Agenda 21;

2. *Invites* contributions of financial and technical resources from donor countries, relevant agencies and other possible sources to support the activities in subparagraphs 1 (a) and (b);

3. *Requests* the Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development to review, on a regular basis, the implementation of the present resolution, together with its consideration of the subject of the transfer of environmentally sound technology.

13th meeting
24 April 1996

52/8. Third Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific[8]

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

Recalling its resolution 49/7 of 29 April 1993, in which it requested the Executive Secretary to convene a ministerial-level conference on environment and development in 1995 to discuss the state of environment and development, the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific and the Regional Strategy on Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development, as well as Agenda 21 and other outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, and to provide further guidance on the measures for their implementation,

Noting with satisfaction the successful organization of the third Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, held in Bangkok in November 1995, which adopted the Ministerial Declaration on Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific and the Regional Action Programme for Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development, 1996-2000,

Convinced that economic development, environmental protection and social development are interdependent and mutually reinforcing elements of sustainable development, which must serve as a framework for improving the quality of life of the people in the Asian and Pacific region,

Recognizing the need for an integrated, multisectoral approach through comprehensive policies and programmes and adequate resources to address the environment and development issues confronting the policy planners and decision makers in the Asian and Pacific region,

Recognizing also the strong interest of members and associate members in the regional and subregional cooperation activities that will follow up the third Ministerial Conference,

1. *Endorses* the recommendations of the third Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, including the Ministerial Declaration on Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific and the Regional Action Programme for Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development, 1996-2000, and calls for their early implementation, including the decision to make efforts for establishing a regional funding mechanism, when necessary;

2. *Requests* all members and associate members to participate actively in the implementation of the recommendations of the third Ministerial Conference;

3. *Urges* all United Nations bodies and agencies concerned, multilateral financial institutions, donor countries and agencies to contribute technical and financial resources to implement the recommendations of the third Ministerial Conference;

4. *Calls upon* the members of the Inter-agency Subcommittee on Environment and Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific to play an effective role in the implementation of the Regional Action Programme as coordinators of areas identified by the Subcommittee;

5. *Requests* the Executive Secretary:

(a) To mobilize both human and financial resources for the implementation of the recommendations of the third Ministerial Conference;

(b) To ensure effective coordination and joint pursuit of the activities of all concerned United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, as well as non-governmental organizations, in facilitating and monitoring the implementation of the recommendations of the third Ministerial Conference;

(c) To include in the agenda of the fourth session of the Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, to be held in 1997, a mid-term review and assessment of the progress achieved in the implementation of the recommendations of the third Ministerial Conference and to report thereon to the Commission at its fifty-fourth session.

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[8] See para. 137 above.

13th meeting
24 April 1996

52/9. Intra-Asia and Asia-Europe land bridges[9]

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

Recognizing the critical role played by transport and communications in the economic and social development of the region, and the emphasis increasingly being placed by members and associate members on developing and strengthening intraregional and interregional land transport linkages as part of an integrated regional transport system to sustain growth in international trade and tourism, and for the further promotion of regional economic cooperation,

Recalling its resolutions 48/1 of 23 April 1992 on the Beijing Declaration on Regional Economic Cooperation and 48/11 of 23 April 1992 on road and rail transport modes in relation to facilitation measures,

Recalling also its resolutions 50/1 of 13 April 1994 on the Delhi Declaration on Strengthening Regional Economic Cooperation in Asia and the Pacific towards the Twenty-first Century and 51/8 of 1 May 1995 on the implementation of the New Delhi Action Plan on Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 50/97 of 20 December 1995 on specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries, in which the Assembly requested the regional commissions, among others, to identify priority areas for action at the national and subregional levels and to draw up action programmes,

Taking into account the recommendations of the Committee on Transport and Communications at its second session in November 1995, and of the Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation at its fifth session in April 1996, that the Asian land transport infrastructure development (ALTID) project comprising the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway projects, as well as land transport facilitation, should constitute a priority activity in the New Delhi Action Plan and in the secretariat's programme of work,

Recognizing that the return of peace in the region and increased rates of growth both in intraregional and interregional trade and in tourism have created an unprecedented opportunity, as well as a demand for reliable and efficient land transport facilities,

Being aware of the strong interest and support for land transport infrastructure development expressed by national leaders gathered at the first Asia-Europe Meeting, held at Bangkok in March 1996,

Recalling specifically the ALTID criteria of developing capital-to-capital links, as well as the principle of "unhindered access" for all participating countries, as agreed upon at the seventh meeting of the Steering Group of the Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation, held at Ulaanbaatar in September 1995,

Noting with appreciation the significant progress made by the secretariat over the biennium 1994-1995 in implementing activities under the ALTID project and the active participation of members and associate members, the close cooperation with the Economic Commission for Europe and the European Community, as well as interested agencies and subregional organizations, and the generous financial support provided by donor countries to develop and strengthen intra-Asia and Asia-Europe land bridges to facilitate international trade and tourism,

1. *Urges* members and associate members:

(a) To lend full support and cooperation to the Executive Secretary in implementing activities under the ALTID project;

(b) To seek ways and means of constructing the missing highway and railway links, and of upgrading and/or extending existing links, as well as constructing new links which have been identified as part of the Asian Highway and the Trans-Asian Railway networks;

(c) To consider the possibility of acceding, if they have not already done so, to the international conventions referred to in Commission resolution 48/11 of 23 April 1992, as well as related international transit conventions;

2. *Requests* bilateral and multilateral donors and funding agencies, as well as international and intergovernmental organizations, to support ALTID activities and initiatives at the regional and national levels to create intra-Asia and Asia-Europe land bridges;

3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary:

(a) To provide full support for the implementation of activities enumerated in the New Delhi Action Plan on Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific to achieve the completion and bringing into operation of both the Asian Highway and the Trans-Asian Railway networks, including Asia-

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[9] See para. 218 above.

Europe links and those linkages proposed at the Asia-Europe Meeting, at the earliest possible date;

(b) To encourage and facilitate the efforts of countries to accede, if they have not yet done so, to the international land transport facilitation conventions referred to in Commission resolution 48/11 as an integral component of programmes to develop land transport infrastructure;

(c) To ensure that the implementation of ALTID activities progresses in a balanced and concurrent manner in the various subregions of Asia;

(d) To coordinate the implementation of the ALTID project effectively with the Economic Commission for Europe to ensure the eventual compatibility of standards and requirements of land transport networks of international importance in Asia and Europe, as well as with other international agencies and organizations in order to avoid duplication of work;

4. *Further requests* the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at its fifty-fourth session, and biennially thereafter, on the progress in the implementation of the present resolution.

13th meeting
24 April 1996

52/10. Revised Action Programme for Regional Economic Cooperation in Trade and Investment[10]

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

Recalling its resolution 49/1 of 29 April 1993 on the implementation of the Action Programme for Regional Economic Cooperation in Trade and Investment,

Noting with appreciation the implementation of the Action Programme carried out so far, in which some elements have been successfully completed,

Noting also the new developments which have a bearing on the prospects and opportunities for cooperation in the trade and investment fields and which require the revision of some elements and the inclusion of others,

Acknowledging the revision to the Action Programme as approved by the Steering Group of the Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation at its seventh meeting, held at Ulaanbaatar in September 1995, and endorsed by the Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation at its fifth session,

1. *Endorses* the revised Action Programme for Regional Economic Cooperation in Trade and Investment, as annexed to the present resolution;

2. *Calls upon* the Executive Secretary to pay due attention, subject to the availability of resources, to the activities of the secretariat in the implementation of the revised Action Programme;

3. *Encourages* all members and associate members to support and participate actively in the implementation of the revised Action Programme;

4. *Invites* the United Nations Development Programme, the Asian Development Bank and other interested bilateral and multilateral donors to collaborate actively with the secretariat in its efforts to implement the revised Action Programme.

13th meeting
24 April 1996

Annex

REVISED ACTION PROGRAMME FOR REGIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION IN TRADE AND INVESTMENT

A. Growth of intraregional trade

1. Review and analysis of regional trade patterns

1. Under the Action Programme, policy-oriented issues of concern to the region, particularly those recommended from time to time by the Steering Group and the Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation to harness the full potential of the dynamism in the Asian and Pacific region and to spread that dynamism more widely across the region for the expansion of intraregional and interregional trade, will continue to be addressed. In the first instance, special consideration will be given to the following: (a) non-tariff barriers impeding trade expansion in the region in the post-Uruguay Round situation; and (b) cross-border trade, including the requisite institutional and administrative arrangements to facilitate the trade of goods and services between countries sharing common borders. A comparative study on the regional experience in border trade and cross-border transactions through bilateral agreements or subregional cooperation initiatives will be undertaken.

2. The Expert Group Meeting on the Follow-up to the Implementation of the Delhi Declaration on Strengthening Regional Economic Cooperation in Asia and the Pacific towards the Twenty-first Century, held in New Delhi in April 1995, recommended that, in view of the volatility in exchange rates and short-term capital movements, and the consequent instability in the financial system, a study on the minimization of risks on account of exchange rate fluctuations was required;

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[10] See para. 125 above.

resources permitting, the study will be undertaken. Moreover, the New Delhi Meeting considered that regional economic cooperation for the establishment of trade-creating joint ventures was important. It decided that concerted policy measures should be evolved and that the relevant issues should be investigated.

2. Strengthening of institutional arrangements for the expansion of regional trade

(a) *Regional arrangements for facilitating trade expansion*

3. To promote the expansion of intraregional trade and encourage the less developed among the developing countries of the Asian and Pacific region to join the mainstream of the export-led growth in the region, certain institutional arrangements are needed. The secretariat will explore new possibilities in the post-Uruguay Round trade regime and against the backdrop of the establishment of free trading arrangements. In this context, revitalization of existing institutional arrangements, such as the Bangkok Agreement, the Asian Clearing Union and the Asian Reinsurance Corporation, will be undertaken with a view to facilitating further expansion of intraregional trade.

(b) *Regional "exim" facility*

4. Expansion of trade within the region is hindered by the absence of a regional institutional framework for the refinancing of trade. Since suppliers' credit plays an important role in determining the direction of trade and many of the countries of the region are capital-deficient, trade flows have often been determined on the basis of hard currency realizations, even at the risk of lower unit values. The possibility of establishing a regional export-import ("exim") facility to supplement and coordinate efforts of national central/exim banks and improve the availability of funds for trade will be examined.

(c) *Human resources development*

5. Given the importance of human resources development, regional institutes of excellence need to be identified from among existing institutions in the region, based on criteria reflecting, *inter alia*, available infrastructure support facilities, the capacity for carrying out training, exposure to foreign clientele, the capability for consultancy with international organizations and experience in organizing training courses. The New Delhi Meeting acknowledged that special training programmes for exporters focusing on emerging challenges, such as new standards for quality control, packaging needs and eco-labelling, were urgently needed, and this will also be addressed. Cooperation between national institutions in the region will be promoted to increase access to human resources development facilities within the region.

3. Regional trade expansion infrastructure

6. An improved information system for trade and investment, giving particular attention to wide dissemination, is essential, not only for more effective policy formulation but also to enable the private sector to capitalize on the new opportunities within the region. Reduction of trade transaction costs, particularly those related to information flows, also requires special attention, to enable the development of mechanisms to establish a two-way flow, electronic and otherwise, of trade and investment information among countries of the ESCAP region as well as between those countries and the rest of the world. Therefore, a comprehensive mechanism will be established for developing and using existing databases for trade and trade-related investment matters, as well as trade points across the region under the Special Programme for Trade Efficiency of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), with the assistance of ESCAP.

7. In collaboration with the United Nations Statistics Division and the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO, a model database will be developed and the various mechanisms for dissemination will be examined, including the use of CD-ROM and on-line access. A comprehensive survey to identify the non-tariff measures of the developing countries of the ESCAP region will be undertaken, as the information relating to the developing countries currently available through the trade analysis and information system (TRAINS) developed by UNCTAD is dated and its coverage relates only to selected developing countries of the region.

8. To enhance the effectiveness of the Regional Trade Information Network (TISNET) and to enable members and associate members of ESCAP to benefit from new opportunities for assessing trade information, the arrangement made with the UNCTAD Special Programme for Trade Efficiency through which ESCAP members and associate members can make use of electronic trading opportunities will be given wider publicity.

4. Network of trade-related research institutions

9. The network of national research institutions, promoted by ESCAP with the active support of the United Nations Development Programme, is working towards the objective of strengthening research capabilities for analysing and forecasting trade-related policy changes. The ongoing activities under the programme, through which member organizations are encouraged to develop and update regional bibliographies on trade-related research and to participate actively in a commonly defined work programme of trade-related research and its dissemination through seminars and the exchange of researchers between institutions through fellowships, will be continued.

5. Technical barriers to trade

10. The adoption of the ISO 9000 series is influencing the pattern of trade in the world. The ongoing activities of the ESCAP secretariat in strengthening national capabilities in standardization and quality certification processes will be pursued as these make it easier for small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as the less technologically advanced countries of the region, to keep up with global developments relating to the quality control of exportables.

6. Regional commodity problems

11. In the post-Uruguay Round situation, there is a need for greater attention to be paid to regional commodity problems, especially as each commodity has its own peculiar dynamics. In addition, the increasing economic affluence of many parts of the Asian and Pacific region opens up the prospects for increased levels of per capita consumption of agriculture-based products, greater investment in value-added processing and greater opportunities for trade. In this context, a set of activities will be undertaken, including research and studies, seminars and workshops, focusing on potential diversification prospects for individual commodities such as rice, tea, coffee, pulses, spices and vegetable oils. These commodities are particularly important to countries in the region as foreign exchange earners and for sustaining and generating employment opportunities, especially for the poor. In due course, additional commodities and primary products may be included for study under a regional commodity programme, subject to the availability of resources.

B. Expansion of intraregional investment flows

Regional investment information and promotion service

12. A recent study on the economic feasibility and viability of the Regional Investment Information and Promotion Service (RIIPS) by the ESCAP secretariat identified "Trade Match", initiated by the Confederation of Asia and the Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CACCI), and electronic trading opportunities developed by the UNCTAD Special Programme for Trade Efficiency as viable instruments for introducing RIIPS. CACCI and UNCTAD have entered into an agreement with ESCAP to make these two facilities available throughout the entire ESCAP region, and this collaboration will be strengthened.

13. The facilitation of investment-related information through Trade Match and electronic trading opportunities will be the major activity under RIIPS, while regional advisory services on investment promotion will be available to assist investment-related organizations, such as boards of investment and chambers of commerce and industry, in the promotion of foreign direct investment in the region through advisory and training services.

14. The New Delhi Meeting suggested that regional associations of industries and services on a sectoral basis should be promoted to encourage greater interaction within the private sector. Such interaction would be fostered based on the experience of the Association of South East Asian Nations. A proposal to establish a North-East Asian business forum is currently being pursued.

C. Development of small and medium-sized enterprises

1. Study on the regional experience of export-oriented small and medium-sized enterprises

15. A comprehensive study on the regional experience of export-oriented small and medium-sized enterprises, focusing on industrial activities in which those enterprises have played a predominant role in terms of their contribution to gross domestic product, exports, employment and technology diffusion, is being implemented. The study attempts to identify the possibilities of promoting joint ventures in manufactured goods such as leather, textiles, light engineering goods and electronics, and to examine the potential for developing a regional component market based on subcontracting arrangements between enterprises of different countries.

2. Promotion of enterprise-to-enterprise cooperation for small and medium-sized enterprises

16. Activities aimed at promoting enterprise-to-enterprise cooperation, which would allow the pooling of the financial resources, technologies and skills of small and medium-sized enterprises from different countries of the region, as well as activities to assist such enterprises in marketing, will be continued. In this context, ESCAP, in cooperation with the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, could play a catalytic role.

3. Asia-Pacific International Trade Fair

17. The Fifth Asia-Pacific International Trade Fair (ASPAT'94) was held successfully in Beijing in June 1994, and benefited, in particular, small and medium-sized enterprises. Since the holding of ASPAT'94, several member countries have indicated their interest in hosting the Fair, on a voluntary basis (Philippines, 1996; Republic of Korea, 1999; India, 2000; Malaysia, 2002). In view of the potential for using such fairs for the promotion of trade and investment in the region, it has been recognized that this modality can be used

successfully for the development of small and medium-sized enterprises. Accordingly, it is proposed to establish a calendar to organize ASPAT on a regular basis, and to ensure early dissemination of information to facilitate participation.

D. Emerging trade and investment-related concerns

1. Implications for trade expansion of implementing the Uruguay Round agreements

18. The Uruguay Round agreements mark a new phase in international economic and trade relationships. The era of "non-reciprocity" in multilateral trade relations is virtually over, and the thinking on the part of industrialized countries is that developing economies may not need "special and differential treatment" for greater market access opportunities in the industrialized world. The conclusion of the Uruguay Round also signifies the bringing together under an umbrella agreement of the multilateral rules relating to trade in goods and trade in services, as well as the rules relating to the protection and provision of intellectual property rights and foreign direct investment.

19. As an open multilateral trading system is indispensable for the sustained development of countries in the ESCAP region, it is necessary to examine how the implementation of the Uruguay Round agreements could be pursued expeditiously in the region. In this regard, it is necessary to monitor and disseminate information on progress in the implementation of the agreements outside the region, particularly those relating to agriculture and textiles. A systematic and careful analysis focusing on sectoral studies and the promotion of country and group strategies is also called for. Policy-oriented studies should include issues related to trade in services, multilateral trade rules, as well as trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights (TRIPs) and trade-related investment measures (TRIMs). In addition, the emerging issues of social standards and trade and environment are of special concern to the region, and the countries of the region should ensure that these are not used as new non-tariff barriers to undermine their competitiveness. A regional approach to those issues, taking into account subregional positions, should therefore be developed, especially in preparation for the first ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organization, scheduled to be held in Singapore at the end of 1996.

20. The preparations required at the national level for dealing with new issues, given the comprehensiveness of the agreements and issues involved, are of critical importance to developing economies of the ESCAP region. Accordingly, technical assistance to those economies is necessary to enhance their understanding of the Uruguay Round agreements, as well as to enable them to set up the necessary national legal and administrative framework to implement the agreements.

2. Trade efficiency

21. Business enterprises require access to relevant tools, techniques, technologies and information to restructure their business around electronic commerce. ESCAP should facilitate this access by addressing developments in the application of electronic commerce in trade and transport, retail and logistics management, and trade-related finance.

22. ESCAP, in collaboration with the Asia EDIFACT Board, will prepare a series of training materials to provide trade practitioners with a clear understanding of the benefits that can be derived from introducing electronic data interchange (EDI), as well as the necessary conditions and factors which will lead to the successful implementation and management of EDI.

23. As a separate programme, a series of seminars and advisory services on trade efficiency should be organized in the developing countries of the region. In this regard, the secretariat will enlist the support of the Asia EDIFACT Board and national trade facilitation bodies, trade promotion organizations, EDI councils, chambers of commerce and regional and national organizations involved in the promotion of EDI.

E. Economies in transition

1. Regional cooperation to overcome macroeconomic problems

24. The economies in transition continue to face several major impediments to the successful implementation of their programmes of economic reform. One critical consideration is the establishment and maintenance of macroeconomic stability within their new market-oriented economic environments. In addition, these economies need to focus attention on various other aspects of their economic development, such as trade liberalization, trade efficiency, the expansion of trade with economies other than their traditional trading partners, price liberalization, the introduction of competition with the private sector, the maximization of foreign direct investment flows and the management of a supportive exchange rate policy.

25. The regional economic cooperation programme should address these issues and provide the economies in transition with the necessary technical assistance for policy-making and macroeconomic management. Entrepreneurship development within these economies should be promoted to facilitate their successful transition to market economies. However, as it is important to avoid duplication of effort, the assistance proposed will be undertaken in consultation with other international and regional institutions, including the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the

Asian Development Bank and the Economic Commission for Europe.

2. Integration of the newly independent Asian republics into the region

26. Seven Asian republics of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, although ESCAP members, have remained isolated from the rest of the region despite historical links to Asia. Studies to identify emerging complementarities between the Asian republics and other countries of the Asian and Pacific region would be beneficial to policy makers in the Asian republics and to those in the rest of the region. The linkages that would be focused upon are trade, transport and communications and investment possibilities. In addition, as most of these countries are rich in energy resources, the prospects for mutual cooperation with Asian countries in the energy sector could also be investigated.

27. Assistance in developing an appropriate strategy for linkages with other members of the ESCAP region through transport route development and, in particular, land transport corridors with connections to seaports in neighbouring countries is vital, especially since almost all the economies in transition are landlocked. The regional cooperation programme will, accordingly, continue to accord special attention to improving land transport linkages through the implementation of the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway projects, and improving land transport facilitation measures as integral parts of the Asian land transport infrastructure development (ALTID) project, with a view to identifying transport routes that are of regional and subregional importance for establishing rail and road linkages between these economies and the rest of the region.

28. In considering cooperative action for promoting trade relations and development in the Asian republics, the impact of specific trade-related projects might be evaluated. Among the projects which could be included are transit traffic facilities, including those proposed through the Islamic Republic of Iran. (The facilities have been offered to provide such landlocked countries with railroad access to the open sea.) The progress in the implementation of Commission resolution 48/11 of 23 April 1992 on road and rail transport modes in relation to facilitation measures, in countries in transition and their neighbouring States, could also be evaluated.

F. Inter-subregional cooperation

Studies on the current status of interaction

29. Regional economic cooperation arrangements in Asia and the Pacific exist at various levels and can range from restricted schemes such as "growth triangles", to interregional schemes, and the establishment of preferential arrangements. Most of these schemes operate independently of each other. It is proposed that studies will be undertaken to examine the current status, objectives and possible linkages between members of the different regional economic cooperation arrangements. The studies will be disaggregated by the main sectors of economic activity in order to focus on policy-level initiatives that would promote cooperation in areas of shared interest. The studies will also suggest modalities for nurturing inter-subregional cooperation by initiating and encouraging interaction among the various subregional groups, including interaction even at the relevant programme or element level within each grouping. The role of the private sector and non-governmental organizations will also be included in such interaction.

30. The secretariat will focus on selected areas in further studies on subregional growth zones, such as cross-border trade, investment, human resources development and labour mobility, joint tourism development, agriculture and fisheries development, energy development, joint infrastructure networking and environmental protection.

52/11. Strengthening of subregional economic cooperation among the south-western member countries of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, including the member countries of the Economic Cooperation Organization[11]

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

Recalling its resolution 50/8 of 13 April 1994 on the strengthening of subregional economic cooperation in North-East Asia, in which the Commission recognized the need to promote and strengthen subregional economic cooperation as a stepping stone to regional economic cooperation and to the progress and sustained development of the ESCAP region,

Welcoming the initiative taken by the Steering Group of the Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation at its seventh and eighth meetings to give special attention to the North-East Asian subregion with a view to promoting and strengthening the structures facilitating cooperation in that subregion,

Noting with interest the efforts of the secretariat to strengthen cooperation among subregional organizations,

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[11] See para. 125 above.

Noting that there is, among the south-western member countries of ESCAP, including the Economic Cooperation Organization member countries, great potential for sustainable development even though several of them are landlocked and some of them have economies that are in transition to the market system,

Convinced that many of the difficulties faced by countries that are landlocked and in transition to the market system can be overcome through the strengthening of cooperation,

Aware that subregional cooperation could benefit from the exchange of successful experiences among different subregions,

1. *Calls upon* members and associate members to support efforts to promote subregional economic cooperation and invites the Steering Group of the Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation to focus, in some of its future meetings, on promoting economic and technical cooperation in trade, investment, and transport and communications among the south-western member countries of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, including the member countries of the Economic Cooperation Organization;

2. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at its fifty-fourth session on the progress in the implementation of the present resolution.

13th meeting
24 April 1996

Annex I

REVISED PROGRAMME OF WORK, 1996-1997

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Annex I

REVISED PROGRAMME OF WORK, 1996-1997

Programme 31: Regional Cooperation for Development in Asia and the Pacific

Subprogramme 1: Regional economic cooperation

Current situation and orientation:

1. The programme of work on regional economic cooperation is formulated within the framework of the revised medium-term plan for 1992-1997. The current situation with respect to the achievement of the objectives of the medium-term plan is such that they are still in the process of being implemented, taking into account the recent mandates given by the Commission and the decisions of the Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation and its Steering Group, which focus on priorities and issues. To address these issues a convergent and concerted set of research and operational activities were initiated at the start of the implementation of the objectives of the medium-term plan, which have increasingly acquired significance for the implementation of new mandates.

2. The set of activities carried out under the subprogramme during the biennium 1994-1995 focused on structural changes, economic restructuring and policy reforms. They consisted of both research and operational activities which were implemented with the objective of strengthening institutional capacities, skills development, and promoting trade, investment and technology linkages in the region.

3. The primary objectives of the subprogramme during the biennium 1996-1997 will be to support and further spread the development dynamism being experienced by an increasing number of developing countries in the Asian and Pacific region. To that end, the subprogramme will focus on bringing analytical perspectives on economic development issues, strategies and policies; identifying and analysing emerging development challenges facing the countries of the region, as well as the deepening trends towards greater complementarity and interdependence among them. The programme activities will emphasize the continued support for structural changes and policy reforms, strengthening of industry, trade, investment and technology linkages in the region, promotion of institutional capabilities and development of human resources. The programme will also examine the implications of the "Agenda for Development" as a basis for strengthening regional economic cooperation.

4. Efforts will be intensified to assist the developing members and associate members of the Commission in the implementation of the Uruguay Round agreements to facilitate their technological and manufacturing competitiveness and transition to the evolving new trade and investment regimes and help them gain maximum benefit from the implementation of those agreements. Initiatives will be taken to assist them in the context of the new and emerging issues, such as the impact on trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights and trade-related investment measures, trade in services, trade and environment, as well as emerging issues of labour standards and social clauses related to trade and competition policies.

5. The potential offered by the growing prospects of intraregional trade, investment and technology transfer and industrial complementation will be effectively pursued. Regional, subregional and inter-subregional cooperation will be fostered. Special efforts will be made to better utilize the existing regional instruments and promote other relevant instruments for the expansion of intraregional trade and investment. Trade efficiency measures, including business process re-engineering, will be promoted and stimulated through increased use of recent developments in information and communication technologies and with special attention to the role of the private sector. Likewise, improved quality control through the ISO 9000 series will be pursued.

6. Intensified efforts will be made to enable greater participation of the least developed, landlocked and island developing countries, as well as the disadvantaged economies in transition, in the mainstream of the region's economic development. Greater involvement of the subregional organizations, research institutions, private sector and the business community and other non-governmental organizations in the implementation of various activities will be promoted.

Activities:

1.1 International cooperation

(e) External relations:

1-1-101 Collaboration with, and support to, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations outside the United Nations system in strengthening analytical perspectives on economic development issues, industrial and technological development, and strategies and policies, as well as on trade and investment issues (1996, 1997)

1-1-102 Servicing of, and inputs to, meetings of subregional organizations to promote inter-subregional cooperation (1996-1997)

1.2 Parliamentary services

(a) Parliamentary documentation:

1-2-101 Reports to the Commission on the progress of activities in regional economic cooperation (3 in 1996, 3 in 1997)

1-2-102 Annual report to the Commission on preparatory activities for the convening of the Meeting of Ministers of Industry and Technology (1996, 1997)

1-2-103 Annual report to the Commission on emerging challenges and opportunities for regional economic cooperation (1996, 1997)

1-2-104 Reports to the Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation on aspects of regional economic cooperation (3 in 1996, 3 in 1997)

1-2-105 Reports on priority and emerging issues to the Steering Group of the Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation (3 in 1996, 3 in 1997)

1-2-106 Report to the Meeting of Ministers of Industry and Technology (1997)

1-2-107 Report to the Standing Committee of the Bangkok Agreement (1996, 1997)

(b) Substantive services:

1-2-201 Substantive servicing of the Commission (1996, 1997)

1-2-202 Substantive servicing of the Meeting of Ministers of Industry and Technology (1997)

1-2-203 Substantive servicing of the Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation (1996, 1997)

1-2-204 Substantive servicing of the Steering Group of the Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation (1996, 1997)

(d) Ad hoc expert groups and related preparatory work:

1-2-301 Ad hoc expert group on development issues and policies, and related reporting (1996, 1997)

1-2-302 Ad hoc expert group on new approaches in industrial financing, including related reporting (1996)

1-2-303 Ad hoc expert group on regional cooperation measures for assessment and adoption of new and clean technologies, and related reporting (1997)

1-2-304 Ad hoc expert group on inter-subregional cooperation in trade and investment, and related reporting (1997)

1-2-3051 Ad hoc expert group on enhancement of technology flows from advanced developing countries to least developed countries (1994) [1 output postponed from 1994-1995]

1-2-3061 Ad hoc expert group on development issues and policies (1994, 1995) [1 output postponed from 1994-1995]

1.3 Published material

(a) Recurrent publications:

1-3-101	Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific (1996, 1997)
1-3-102	Asia-Pacific Development Journal (biannual)
1-3-103	Development Papers (1997)
1-3-104	Industrial and Technological Development News for Asia and the Pacific (1996, 1997)
1-3-105	Small Industry Bulletin for Asia and the Pacific (1996, 1997)
1-3-106	Regional Trade and Investment Review (1997)
1-3-107	TISNET Trade and Investment Information Bulletin (23 in 1996, 23 in 1997)
1-3-108	Prices of Selected Asia-Pacific Products (monthly)
1-3-109	Directory of Trade Promotion/Development Organizations of Developing Countries and Areas in Asia and the Pacific, eighth edition (1997)
1-3-110	Trade review of the Bangkok Agreement (1996, 1997)
1-3-111	Fertilizer Trade Information, Monthly Bulletin
1-3-1121	Small Industry Bulletin for Asia and the Pacific (1994, 1995) [1 output postponed from 1994-1995]

(b) Non-recurrent publications:

1-3-201	Fiscal and financial management issues for the developing economies in the region within the evolving global and regional environment (1997)
1-3-203	Macroeconomic policies for restructuring, stabilization and growth in the region with special attention to developments in the regional disadvantaged economies in transition (1996)
1-3-204	Institutional and policy reforms for effective mobilization of private capital for development (1996)
1-3-205	Emerging issues and concerns in industrial development and technological development and restructuring in the post-Uruguay Round period: growing competition and need for improved manufacturing competitiveness (1996)
1-3-206	Cooperative measures for promoting interregional and intraregional flows of industrial investments and technology, including for the least developed countries and economies in transition (1997)
1-3-207	Strengthening private sector and non-governmental organization participation, including objective assessment of privatization measures for industrial and technological development (1996)
1-3-208	New and innovative ways to develop and strengthen industrial and technological skills (1997)
1-3-209	Regional cooperation for the development of export-oriented small and medium-sized industries (1996)
1-3-210	Implications of trade-related investment measures and trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights on flows of technology (1996)
1-3-211	Technology indicators and directories of selected research and development institutions, experts and technologies (1996)
1-3-212	Legal aspects of transfer of new and clean sound technologies (1996)
1-3-213	Implications of the adoption of ISO 9000 and organizational re-engineering measures on technological development (1997)
1-3-214	Studies in trade and investment (4 in 1996, 4 in 1997)
1-3-215	Trade and product profiles (1996, 1997)
1-3-216	Implications of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum for intraregional trade (1996)
1-3-217	Implications of the European Union for the Asian and Pacific economies (1996)

1-3-218 Trade efficiency issues and business process re-engineering (1996, 1997)

1-3-219 Industrial relocation and complementarities: prospects and challenges (1997)

1-3-220 Implications of the adoption of ISO 14000 standards for enhanced export of manufactured goods (1997)

1-3-2211 Regional cooperation measures for skills development to promote technology-led industrialization (1994, 1995) [1 output postponed from 1994-1995]

1-3-2221 Feasibility study for the establishment of a forum for promoting sustainable industrial and technological development (1994) [1 output postponed from 1994-1995]

1-3-2231 Directory of selected research and development institutions**[1 output postponed from 1994-1995]

(c) Technical material:

1-3-301 Provision of ad hoc technical information on matters relating to regional economic cooperation in response to requests from the public and private sectors, including non-governmental organizations (1996, 1997)

1.5 Operational activities

(a) Advisory services:

1-5-101 Strengthening macroeconomic management, restructuring, stabilization and growth in countries undergoing the process of transition to a market economy

1-5-102 Strengthening capabilities for developing and promoting small and medium-sized industries, including their linkages with large industries

1-5-103 Policy formulation and reorientation, including institutional development and strengthening for promoting industrial investment flows and technology transfer

1-5-104 Strengthening capabilities for the development and utilization of information technologies for manufacturing industries

1-5-106 Strengthening the development of trade and investment policy, trade promotion and trade efficiency in the developing economies, particularly economies in transition, least developed countries and geographically disadvantaged countries

1-5-110 Promotion of women's participation in economic development

(b) Group training, seminars and workshops:

1-5-201 Macroeconomic management and policy reform in the developing countries of the ESCAP region, including the disadvantaged economies in transition

1-5-203 Regional forum for sustainable industrial development and restructuring in Asia and the Pacific

1-5-204 Development of export-oriented small and medium-sized industries, including the adoption of ISO 9000

1-5-205 Promotion of industrial investment technology flows and consultancy services for emerging technologies for manufacturing industries in selected countries

1-5-207 Development and improvement of agro- and allied industries and national capacity-building for diversification of trade

1-5-208 Intra-subregional and inter-subregional cooperation in trade and investment

1-5-210 Enhancement of regional cooperation in trade efficiency and business process re-engineering

1-5-211 Promotion of exports of developing countries with particular emphasis on least developed and Pacific island countries and developing economies in transition

1-5-212	Implementation of the Uruguay Round agreements and their impact on Asian and Pacific economies and emerging issues related to international trade, investment flows and technology transfer
1-5-214	Networks of institutional support for the development of trade and investment flows
1-5-215	Promotion of women's participation in economic development
1-5-216	Strengthening of regional information services for trade and investment
1-5-217	Preparing small and medium-sized enterprises for the adoption of ISO 14000 standards
1-5-2181	Technology blending for development of small and medium-sized industries [Postponed from 1994-1995]

1.6 Coordination, harmonization and liaison

1-6-001	Collaboration with and inputs to the ACC machinery and other bodies, organizations and departments within the United Nations system on activities relating to the subprogramme
1-6-002	Technical and substantive support to the ESCAP Network of Trade Facilitation Bodies
1-6-003	Technical and substantive support to regional commodities cooperative arrangements
1-6-004	Organization and servicing of the regional Inter-agency Committee on Industrial and Technological Development
1-6-005	Technical and substantive support to the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology, a regional institute of ESCAP

Subprogramme 2: Environment and sustainable development

Current situation and orientation:

1. The main orientation of subprogramme 2, Environment and sustainable development, is strengthening the capability of ESCAP members and associate members in environmental and natural resource management; integration of environmental considerations into economic policy decision-making; transfer of environmentally sound technologies; sustainable rural and urban development; population and sustainable development; and natural disaster reduction.

2. The objectives outlined in the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 and its subsequent revision are steadily being achieved through the implementation of activities included in the biennial programme of work since the start of the plan period. The programmes of work are also oriented to reflect new mandates that have emerged since 1992.

3. The programme of work and priorities for 1996-1997 under the subprogramme is devised taking fully into account the imperatives of Agenda 21 and other relevant agreements, conventions, resolutions and decisions, in particular the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island States (Programme of Action), World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction (Plan of Action), the International Conference on Population and Development (Programme of Action), the global Commission on Sustainable Development (programme of work), the Commission, the ESCAP Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, the Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Development in Asia and the Pacific and the scheduled Ministerial-level Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific. The subprogramme reflects the high priority accorded to human resources development and institution-building to enhance the capability of developing countries in environmental and natural resource management.

4. With sustainable development as a unifying factor, the proposed activities are geared towards translating Agenda 21 into practical actions through cooperation at the international, regional and subregional levels. In this respect, support will be rendered to national authorities and coordinated action between national authorities and non-governmental organizations will be encouraged.

5. The subprogramme derives from regional approaches to sustainable development and technical cooperation in endogenous capacity-building, with special reference to the Regional Strategy on Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development and the Framework of Regional Action for Asia and the Pacific, the Action Programme for Regional Economic Cooperation for Investment-related Technology Transfer, the Bali Declaration on Population and Sustainable Development, and the Action Plan on, and the Strategy for Regional Cooperation in, Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific.

6. While some of the proposed activities have been prompted by the new mandates incumbent upon ESCAP as the regional arm of the United Nations, the others are of a continuous nature. In the concluding biennium of the plan period, the secretariat will focus on the following areas of cooperation which are of growing importance to the ESCAP members and associate members: capacity-building for sustainable development; environmental protection; integration of environmental considerations into economic decision-making; energy development and management, with special emphasis on the energy-environment nexus; mineral resource assessment, development and management, with emphasis on policy orientation and investment promotion; land-use planning and management; assessment and integrated development and management of water resources; natural disaster reduction; space technology applications for sustainable development, including remote sensing and geographic information systems; transfer of environmentally sound technologies; environmentally friendly crop protection and promotion of a balanced use of fertilizers and pesticides; assessment of demographic change in the environmental context; environment database development within the framework of the ESCAP Statistical Information System (ESIS); and environmentally sound and sustainable rural and urban development.

7. As most, if not all, of the activities require a truly interdisciplinary approach in the course of their implementation, the secretariat intends to maintain and strengthen coordination with other United Nations bodies and convention secretariats.

Activities:

2.1 International cooperation

(e) External relations:

2-1-101 Cooperation with, and support to, other intergovernmental and non-governmental bodies and organizations at the international and regional levels on matters relating to all aspects of the subprogramme

2-1-102 Technical and substantive support to the Coordinating Committee for Coastal and Offshore Geoscience Programmes in East and Southeast Asia (CCOP), the Typhoon Committee, the Panel on Tropical Cyclones, the Mekong River Commission and others

2.2 Parliamentary services

(a) Parliamentary documentation:

2-2-101 Six reports to the Commission on the progress of activities in environment and sustainable development (1996, 1997)

2-2-102 Fourteen reports to the Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development on selected issues in relation to the implementation of Agenda 21 (1996, 1997)

(b) Substantive services:

2-2-201 Servicing of the Commission sessions (1996, 1997)

2-2-202 Servicing of the Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development (1996, 1997)

2-2-203 Servicing of the Intergovernmental Consultative Committee on the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development (1996, 1997)

(d) Ad hoc expert groups and related preparatory work:

2-2-301 Energy infrastructure and pricing policies (1997)

2-2-302 Expert group meeting on policies in sustainable development of land and mineral resources (1997)

2-2-303 Sustainable development of water resources (1996)

2-2-304 Methodology for environmental planning and assessment (1997)

2-2-305 Policies on integration of space technology applications into sustainable development planning (1996)

2-2-306 Interlinkages between the environment, morbidity and health

2.3 Published material

(a) Recurrent publications:

2-3-101 Asia-Pacific Environment (quarterly)

2-3-102 Environmental News Briefing (bi-monthly)

2-3-103 ESCAP Energy News (biannual)

2-3-104 Energy Resources Development Series (1997)

2-3-105 Electric Power in Asia and the Pacific 1993-1994 (1996)

2-3-106 Atlas of Mineral Resources of the ESCAP Region — series (1996, 1997)

2-3-107 Mineral Concentration and Hydrocarbon Accumulations in Asia and the Pacific — series (1996)

2-3-108 Urban and Environmental Geology series (1996, 1997)

2-3-109 Implications of the new ocean regime deriving from the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (1997)

2-3-110 Water Resources Journal (quarterly)

2-3-111 Confluence (biannual)

2-3-112 Water Resources Series (1996, 1997)

2-3-113 Space Technology Applications Newsletter (former Remote Sensing Newsletter) (quarterly)

2-3-114 Asian-Pacific Remote Sensing and GIS Journal (biannual)

2-3-116 Agro-chemicals News in Brief (6 in 1996, 6 in 1997)

2-3-1191 ESCAP Environment News (4 in 1994, 4 in 1995) [2 outputs postponed from 1994-1995]

2-3-1201 Agro-chemicals News in Brief (6 in 1994, 6 in 1995) [3 outputs postponed from 1994-1995]

2-3-1211 Energy Resources Development Series (1995) [1 output postponed from 1994-1995]

(b) Non-recurrent publications:

2-3-201 Proceedings of the Ministerial-level Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific (1996)

2-3-202 Agenda 21 and the challenges for the Asian and Pacific region (1997)

2-3-204 Regional implementation of the convention on desertification (1997)

2-3-207 Integrated resource planning: status and potential in Asian countries (related to electricity (1996) and natural gas (1997))

2-3-208 Energy efficiency centres in the Asian and Pacific region (1996)

2-3-209 Studies on community participation in the implementation of environmental regulations in the electric power sector (1997)

2-3-210 Renewable sources of energy supply and environmental management through entrepreneurial development (1996)

2-3-211 Mineral resources assessment, development and management (1997)

2-3-212 Environmental management of mineral resources development in the Asian and Pacific region (1997)

2-3-214 Marine environment and non-living marine resources development (1996)

2-3-215 Water resources of member countries and demand by user sectors, phase IV (1997)

2-3-216 Review of the sustainable development of water resources in Asia and the Pacific (1997)

2-3-217 Guidelines on standardization of geographic information systems (1996)

2-3-218 Space technology and applications capability in Asia and the Pacific: an inventory (1997)

2-3-219 Proceedings of meetings of remote sensing and GIS for environment and natural resources management (1996, 1997)

2-3-220 Proceedings of meetings on space applications for sustainable development (1996)

2-3-221 Modalities for integrating environmental considerations into economic decision-making (1997)

2-3-222 Modelling and simulation of macroeconomic systems, with focus on strategic policy variables (1996)

2-3-223 Study on the socio-economic implications of introducing ozone preservation substances and technologies (1996)

2-3-224 Population and environment (1996)

2-3-225 Environmental protection and urban development in secondary cities (1997)

2-3-226 Guidelines for environmentally sound land-use policies (1996)

2-3-227 Compilation of training material on healthy cities (1996)

2-3-228 Study on economic aspects of the use of less hazardous pesticides and integrated pest management

2-3-229 Report of the workshop on the economic aspects of the use of less hazardous pesticides and integrated pest management (1997)

2-3-230 Supply, marketing, distribution and use of fertilizers (1996, 1997)

2-3-231 Directory of sources of fertilizer-related information (1996)

2-3-232 Proceedings of seminars on environmentally sound development and management of fertilizer (1996, 1997)

2-3-2331 Environment and economics: tools and methodologies for sustainable development (1994, 1995)** [1 output postponed from 1994-1995]

2-3-2341 Sustainable agricultural development strategies (1994, 1995) [1 output postponed from 1994-1995]

2-3-2351 Environmental impact of air pollution on urban/industrial centres (1994)** [1 output postponed from 1994-1995]

2-3-2361 Geology for land-use planning and environmental management (1994, 1995) [2 outputs postponed from 1994-1995]

2-3-2371 Guidelines on the participatory approach to urban environmental management (1995) [1 output postponed from 1994-1995]

2-3-2381 Operational aspects of Agenda 21 (1994) [1 output postponed from 1994-1995]

2-3-2391 Socio-economic implications of global environmental issues in Asia and the Pacific (1995) [1 output postponed from 1994-1995]

(c) Technical material:

2-3-301 Database and modelling for environmental resource accounting, planning and assessment in the Asian and Pacific region within the framework of the ESIS and EBIS database management systems

2-3-302 Maintenance and update of sectoral energy demand database and analysis of the energy situation in Asia

2-3-303 Maintenance and update of energy planning software

2-3-304 Maintenance and update of the regional information services database on remote sensing and GIS (1997)

2-3-305 Provision of ad hoc information on the transfer of environmentally sound technologies (1996, 1997)

2-3-306 Maintenance and update of the database on pesticides and the environment (1996-1997)

2-3-307 Maintenance and update of the database on agro-chemicals and the environment (1996-1997)

2-3-3081 Update on the sectoral energy demand database and analysis of the energy situation in Asia [1 output postponed from 1994-1995]

2.4 Information materials and services

(a) Booklets, pamphlets, fact sheets, wall charts, information kits:

2-4-101 Promotion of environmentally sound and sustainable development

(c) Exhibits and other visual materials:

2-4-201 Exhibits and materials for World Water Day and the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction Day (1996, 1997)

2.5 Operational activities

(a) Advisory services:

2-5-101 Promotion of the implementation of the Regional Action Programme for Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development, as follow-up to the Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, Agenda 21 and the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

2-5-102 Capacity-building for the implementation of environmental conventions and relevant international conventions on hazardous waste management control, and for promotion of waste audits

2-5-103 Community participation and asset creation through coastal environmental management, and evaluation and impact assessment of sustainable development and technical assistance in coastal areas

2-5-104 Energy development, conservation and management policy, environmental impact and risk assessment of energy systems, energy resource options and technologies (gas, coal, power, biogas etc.)

2-5-105 Promotion of applications of new and renewable sources of energy, energy mixes (solar, wind, geothermal etc.), and rural energy supply (integrated energy and environmental issues)

2-5-106 Power system planning and management, including the integrated resource planning, efficiency and environmental aspects

2-5-107 Mineral exploration and environmental management of mineral resources development

2-5-108 Mineral policy and strategies for resource development, and mineral economics, legislation and investment promotion

2-5-109 Environmental geology and geology for land-use planning

2-5-110 Integrated water resources development and management; strengthening of programmes for protection of water resources, water quality and aquatic ecosystems, and efficient management of urban water resources and systems; and mitigation of water-related natural disasters

2-5-111 Space technology applications for sustainable development, with emphasis on policy issues, and institution-building and application of GIS and remote sensing for environmental and natural resources management

2-5-112 Strengthening of national capabilities in space applications for development, with special emphasis on remote sensing and related GIS applications

2-5-114 Strengthening and survey of national/subregional efforts for the transfer of environmentally sound technologies and associated capacity-building

2-5-116 CITYNET (Regional Network of Local Authorities for the Management of Human Settlements), promotion of NGO/city cooperation

2-5-117 TRISHNET (Network of Research, Training and Information Institutes on Human Settlements in Asia and the Pacific), promotion of participatory urban environment research

2-5-118 Promotion and development of pesticide alternatives and strengthening of fertilizer information databases and effective legislation

(b) Group training, seminars and workshops:

2-5-201 Regional action programme for environmentally sound and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific, including global climate change

2-5-202 Involvement of major groups in environmental awareness and management, with special reference to the private sector

2-5-204 Resource conservation and energy efficiency; new and renewable sources of energy with emphasis on rural energy supply, including biogas

2-5-205 Energy resource options and technologies (coal technology, gas pricing, infrastructure etc.), and investment round-tables on natural gas (1996, 1997)

2-5-206 Power system planning and management, including energy/environment interface

2-5-207 Mineral exploration techniques and evaluation methodologies for resource assessment, and environmental management of mineral resources development

2-5-208 Economic geology, mineral resource economics, legislation, and investment promotion in mineral exploration and mining

2-5-209 Geological factors in land-use planning and resource accounting

2-5-210 Integrated marine policies and non-living marine resources assessment and development

2-5-211 Water pricing, water saving and economic use of water, and TCDC group trainings on assessment, integrated and sustainable development, and protection of water resources and aquatic ecosystems

2-5-212 Investment promotion for water and sanitation, women's role in water for sustainable development, and natural hazard reduction

2-5-213 Implementation of the Beijing Declaration on Space Technology Applications for Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, and the Action Plan on, and Strategy for Regional Cooperation in, Space Applications for Sustainable Development: regional space applications programme

2-5-214 Remote sensing and GIS for land and sea resources management, and for tropical ecosystem monitoring

2-5-215 Strengthening of national capabilities in space applications for development with special emphasis on remote sensing and related GIS applications

2-5-216 Monitoring, mapping and sampling techniques for environmental and natural resources management

2-5-217 Integration of environmental considerations into economic decision-making, including modelling and simulation of macroeconomic systems

2-5-218 Assessment of the establishment of a regional cooperative policy mechanism to promote the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, including TECHTRANS exhibitions

2-5-219 Population and environment

2-5-220 Promotion of healthy cities and settlements upgrading (1996, 1997)

2-5-221 Environmental protection and urban development in secondary cities (1997)

2-5-222 Environmentally friendly concepts of crop protection and plant nutrition; and development, marketing and management of agro-chemicals in support of sustainable agricultural development

2.6 Coordination, harmonization and liaison

2-6-001 Collaboration with and inputs to the United Nations ACC machinery and other bodies, organizations and departments within the United Nations system on activities relating to the subprogramme

2-6-002 Organizing and servicing of the Inter-agency Subcommittee on Environment and Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific

2-6-003 Organizing and servicing of the Subcommittee on Water for Asia and the Pacific

2-6-004 Organizing and servicing of the Subcommittee on the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development

Subprogramme 3: Poverty alleviation through economic growth and social development

Current situation and orientation:

1. Mass poverty, despite the region's impressive economic growth and structural change, remains and is likely to continue at high levels in the ESCAP region during this decade. Current estimates indicate that some 800 million persons are living below the poverty line in the region, with half that number living under the particularly abject conditions of extreme poverty. Those numbers represent approximately three fourths of the world's absolute poor. Experience has shown that rapid economic growth, by itself, does not guarantee the elimination or significant reduction of poverty. A holistic approach to economic and social development, with poverty alleviation as its focus, is therefore needed in the region.

2. The primary objectives of subprogramme 3 are to increase the understanding and improve the quality and availability of data and analyses of poverty trends, issues and problems, as well as to improve national capabilities in enhancing the quality of social services to meet the basic needs of the poor in Asia and the Pacific. During the first two bienniums of the medium-term plan period, those objectives were met through a series of parliamentary, research, information and technical assistance activities. Particular emphasis was given to mobilizing government action through the adoption of the following regional plans of action: the Agenda for Action on Social Development in the ESCAP Region; the Jakarta Plan of Action on Human Resources Development in the ESCAP Region, as revised in 1994; the Agenda for Action for the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons; the Regional Action Plan on Urbanization; the Jakarta Declaration for the Advancement of Women in Asia and the Pacific; and the Bali Declaration on Population and Sustainable Development.

3. The proposed activities for 1996-1997 will focus on providing assistance to member countries in their efforts to alleviate poverty through economic growth, investment to increase the productivity of the poor, improved access to income-earning opportunities, and enhancement of the quality of life through improved social service delivery systems. Particular attention will be given to providing support in the implementation of the above-mentioned regional plans of action. The work programme includes a complementary set of parliamentary, research, information and operational activities which will address key issues, including the impact of macroeconomic liberalization on poverty alleviation; social security and services for the poor; human resources development for the poor; population; urbanization; rural development; women in development; and the impact of technology on the poor.

4. The work will be carried out under the guidance of the Committee on Poverty Alleviation through Economic Growth and Social Development, which normally meets annually. ESCAP will also provide substantive services to the Fifth Asian and Pacific Ministerial Conference on Social Development, which will be convened in 1997, in lieu of the Committee, to discuss the follow-up of the results of the World Summit for Social Development.

Activities:

3.1 International cooperation

(e) External relations:

3-1-101 Cooperation with, and support to, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations outside the United Nations system on matters relating to the subprogramme

3.2 Parliamentary services

(a) Parliamentary documentation:

3-2-101 Report to the Commission on issues in poverty alleviation (1996, 1997)

3-2-102 Annual report to the Commission on the implementation of the Jakarta Declaration for the Advancement of Women in Asia and the Pacific (1996, 1997)

3-2-103 Report to the Commission on the mid-point review of progress in the implementation of the Jakarta Plan of Action on Human Resources Development in the ESCAP Region (1997)

3-2-104 Report to the Commission on the implementation of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 (1996)

3-2-105 Reports to the Committee on Poverty Alleviation through Economic Growth and Social Development (4 in 1996)

3-2-106 Report to the Committee on Poverty Alleviation through Economic Growth and Social Development on the implementation of the Regional Action Plan on Urbanization (1996)

3-2-107 Reports to the Fifth Asian and Pacific Ministerial Conference on Social Development (3 in 1997)

(b) Substantive services:

3-2-201 Substantive servicing of the Commission (1996, 1997)

3-2-202 Substantive servicing of the Committee on Poverty Alleviation through Economic Growth and Social Development (1996)

3-2-203 Substantive servicing of the Fifth Asian and Pacific Ministerial Conference on Social Development (1997)

(d) Ad hoc expert groups and related preparatory work:

3-2-301 Ad hoc expert group meeting on phase III of the Jakarta Plan of Action on Human Resources Development in the ESCAP Region and related reporting (1996)

3-2-302 Ad hoc expert group meeting on the implementation of the Agenda for Action on Social Development in the ESCAP Region and related reporting (1997)

3-2-303 Ad hoc expert group meeting on analysis of women's role in family planning management and related reporting (1996)

3-2-304 Ad hoc expert group meeting in preparation for the 1998 Ministerial Conference on Urbanization and related reporting (1997)

3-2-305 Ad hoc expert group meeting on regional follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and related reporting (1996)

3-2-3071 Regional preparations for the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) (1995) [1 output postponed from 1994-1995]

3.3 Published material

(a) Recurrent publications:

3-3-101 Human Resources Development Newsletter (biannual)

3-3-102 Social Development Newsletter (biannual)

3-3-103 Asia-Pacific Population Journal (quarterly)

3-3-104 Population Headliners (6 in 1996, 6 in 1997)

3-3-105 Newsletter on Poverty Alleviation Initiatives (quarterly)

3-3-106 WINAP Newsletter (1 in 1996, 2 in 1997)

3-3-1071 Women in Development Newsletter (2 in 1994, 2 in 1995) [1 output postponed from 1994-1995]

(b) Non-recurrent publications:

3-3-201 Impact of macroeconomic liberalization on economic growth and poverty alleviation (1996)

3-3-202 Analysis of programmes for alleviating poverty at the local level (1997)

3-3-203 Guidelines for implementing the Agenda for Action on Social Development in the ESCAP region (1996)

3-3-204 Policies on emerging social issues in Asia and the Pacific (1996, 1997)

3-3-205 Social security for the poor in the ESCAP region (1996)

3-3-206 Policies and programmes for strengthening the role of the family in providing social protection (1997)

3-3-207 Directory of centres of excellence for human resources development in the ESCAP region (1996)

3-3-208 Registration procedures for non-governmental organizations working for human resources development (1996)

3-3-209 Innovative approaches to poverty alleviation through the planning and delivery of human resources development services in Asia and the Pacific (1996)

3-3-210 Policies and programmes for the development of human resources development among youth (1997)

3-3-211 Approaches to community-based drug demand reduction in the ESCAP region (1997)

3-3-212 Approaches to community-based HIV/AIDS prevention in the ESCAP region (1997)

3-3-213 Training manual on community-based responses to critical social issues: poverty, drug abuse and HIV/AIDS (1997)

3-3-214 Management of self-help organizations of people with disabilities (1996)

3-3-215 Production and distribution of assistive devices for people with disabilities (1997)

3-3-216 Approaches to the development of comprehensive national policies on ageing (1997)

3-3-217 Trends in fertility and family planning for the ESCAP region (1997)

3-3-220 Role of ageing and family dynamics in population (1997)

3-3-221 Demographic aspects of women, development and poverty (1997)

3-3-222 Compendium of inter-agency work programmes on rural poverty alleviation (1996)

3-3-223 The impact of market reforms and price liberalization on agriculture and rural development (1996)

3-3-224 Market-generated rural employment for rural poverty alleviation (1997)

3-3-225 Manual on rural poverty alleviation through replication of successful cases (1997)

3-3-226 Increasing people's participation in urban governance (1997)

3-3-227 Experiences in urban community-based savings and credit systems (1996)

3-3-228 Directory of non-governmental organizations on women (1996)

3-3-229 Improving the status of women in poverty (1997)

3-3-230 Promotion of town and village small industries for employment generation and poverty alleviation in rural areas (1997)

3-3-2311 Directory of women's periodicals in Asia and the Pacific (1995) [1 output postponed from 1994-1995]

3-3-2321 Local-level policy development on the consequences of ageing (6 in 1994, 1 in 1995) [1 output postponed from 1994-1995]

3-3-2331 Accessibility of contraceptives in selected countries (XB) [1 output postponed from 1992-1993]

3-3-2341 Innovative infrastructure and service delivery in low-income settlements (1995) [1 output postponed from 1994-1995]

3-3-2351 Guidelines on the development of comprehensive national policies on ageing (1995) [1 output postponed from 1994-1995]

3-3-236 Legislation on equal opportunities and full participation in development for disabled persons: examples from the ESCAP region

(c) *Technical material:*

3-3-301 Training material on the planning and delivery of human resources development services for the poor (1996)

3-3-302 Data bank on human resources development policies and programmes within the framework of the ESIS and EBIS database management systems (1997)

3-3-303 Training material to promote skills development and employment for youth (1997)

3-3-304 POPIN data bank products and services within the framework of the ESIS and EBIS database management systems (1996, 1997)

3-3-305 POPIN products and services (1996, 1997)

3-3-306 Demographic data sheet (1996, 1997)

3-3-307 Regional database on women in development within the framework of the ESIS and EBIS database management systems (1997)

3-3-308 Asia-Pacific Fact Sheet on Drug Demand Reduction and HIV/AIDS Prevention (4 issues)

3.4 Information materials and services

(a) *Booklets, pamphlets, fact sheets, wall charts, information kits:*

3-4-101 Information materials for the Fifth Asian and Pacific Ministerial Conference on Social Development (1997)

3-4-102 Information materials to mark the mid-point of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons (1997)

3.5 Operational activities

(a) *Advisory services:*

3-5-101 Impact of macroeconomic liberalization on economic growth and poverty alleviation

3-5-102 Alleviating poverty through local-level programmes

3-5-103 Support for the implementation of the Agenda for Action on Social Development in the ESCAP Region

3-5-104 Support for the implementation of the Jakarta Plan of Action on Human Resources Development in the ESCAP Region

3-5-105 Support for the implementation of the Agenda for Action for the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons

3-5-106 Support for the implementation of the Bali Declaration on Population and Sustainable Development and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development

3-5-107 Support for market-generated rural employment

3-5-108 Support for the implementation of the Regional Action Plan on Urbanization and support of urban forums

3-5-109 Support for the implementation of the Jakarta Declaration for the Advancement of Women in Asia and the Pacific

(b) Group training, seminars and workshops:

3-5-201 Impact of macroeconomic liberalization on economic growth and poverty alleviation

3-5-202 Exchange of experience on poverty alleviation through local-level programmes

3-5-203 Strengthening national capabilities in the implementation of the Agenda for Action on Social Development in the ESCAP region

3-5-204 Promoting social protection to meet the basic needs of the poor

3-5-205 Strengthening the role of the family in providing social protection

3-5-206 Promoting human resources development policies and programmes

3-5-207 Improving the utilization of human resources in the public sector

3-5-208 Promoting gender equity in human resources development

3-5-209 Promoting employment and skills development among low-income youth and youth participation in development

3-5-210 Establishing and strengthening community-based drug demand reduction and HIV/AIDS prevention programmes

3-5-211 Improving the quality of life of specific disadvantaged groups through innovative policies and programmes

3-5-212 Strengthening of population policies

3-5-213 Improvement of demographic analysis

3-5-214 Strengthening of the Asia-Pacific POPIN Network and projects

3-5-215 Target group-oriented policies and programmes for rural and urban poverty alleviation

3-5-216 Off-farm and non-farm employment generation and its impact on rural poverty alleviation

3-5-217 Market-generated employment for rural poverty alleviation

3-5-218 Ad hoc expert group meeting on rural poverty alleviation under an economic liberalization regime

3-5-219 Participatory and gender-sensitive urban planning and management

3-5-220 Land management for equitable access to land

3-5-221 Alleviation of poverty among women

3-5-222 Implementation of the Jakarta Declaration for the Advancement of Women in Asia and the Pacific

3-5-223 Enhancement of technological capabilities of small village and town industries for increased competitiveness

3-5-224 Implementation of the Agenda for Action for the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons

3-5-2251 Development of a comprehensive information base on poverty issues [Postponed from 1994-1995]

3-5-2261 Institutional support programmes for rural poverty alleviation and utilization of agricultural biomass [Postponed from 1994-1995]

3-5-2271 Introduction, utilization and assessment of conventional and new technologies in rural areas [Postponed from 1994-1995]

3.6 Coordination, harmonization and liaison

3-6-001 Organizing and servicing of the inter-agency task force on the implementation of the Agenda for Action on Social Development in the ESCAP Region

3-6-002 Organizing and servicing of the Asia-Pacific Inter-organizational Task Force on Disability-related Concerns

3-6-003 Organizing and servicing of the regional Inter-agency Committee on Poverty Alleviation

3-6-004 Organizing and servicing of the regional Inter-organizational Committee on Urbanization

3-6-005 Technical and substantive support to the Regional Coordination Centre for Research and Development of Coarse Grains, Pulses, Roots and Tuber Crops in the Humid Tropics of Asia and the Pacific, a regional institute of ESCAP

3-6-006 Collaboration with and inputs to the ACC machinery and other bodies, organizations and departments within the United Nations system on activities relating to the subprogramme

3-6-007 Organizing and servicing of the Inter-agency Task Force on the Advancement of Women in Asia and the Pacific

3-6-008 Organizing and servicing of the Inter-agency Subcommittee on HIV/AIDS Prevention

Subprogramme 4: Transport and communications

Current situation and orientation:

1. The programmed activities are designed for (a) identification of the changing problems of transport, communications and tourism in the region and the working out of feasible solutions; (b) coordination and harmonization of transport, communications and tourism-related activities undertaken in the region by the United Nations organizations and its specialized agencies, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations at the subregional and regional levels; (c) strengthening of interregional cooperation with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) region, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) region and the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) region; (d) implementation of the regional action programme for phase II (1992-1996) of the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific; and (e) implementation of the New Delhi Action Plan on Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific.

2. The regional action programme for phase II (1992-1996) of the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific was developed through extensive consultations with the members and associate members of the Commission and was subsequently endorsed by the Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Transport and Communications, held in June 1992, and by the Commission at its forty-ninth session in 1993. The Meeting of Ministers decided to keep the regional action programme open-ended to take account of changes in social, political and economic development trends. As a consequence, it has been reviewed and amended on an annual basis. The same approach has been taken in the development of the New Delhi Action Plan on Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific.

3. The subprogramme provides assistance in the development of transport and communications related to the specific needs of groups of countries, owing to the region's geographical diversity (including the archipelagic, landlocked and riverine countries), as well as different levels of economic development of the countries (including newly industrializing economies, disadvantaged economies in transition and the least developed countries). At the same time, there are common problems identified in the region, such as lack of data and information; outdated legislative and commercial framework; insufficient investment and maintenance for infrastructure development; management and operational difficulties; lack of adequately trained human resources; lack of integrated planning and coordination among different modes of transport; the slow pace of transfer of technology and administrative management skills; lack of environmental and safety concern in transport; and inadequate rural transport and infrastructure.

4. Recognizing that economic growth is one of the major contributory factors to poverty alleviation, through improving the quality of life of the population and sustainable development, and that the provision of transport and communications infrastructure and services is a key requirement for economic growth, the subprogramme has been aligned to provide maximum support to the economic growth of the countries in the region. The other significant aspects of the subprogramme are: the analysis and recognition of the changing problems of infrastructure development needs that are essential for the sustained economic and social growth and development in the region; and the strengthening of inter-agency coordination and cooperation in the field of transport and communications at the regional level.

Activities:

4.1 International cooperation

(e) External relations:

4-1-101 Cooperation with, and support to, governmental, non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations outside the United Nations system on matters related to the subprogramme

4.2 Parliamentary services

(a) Parliamentary documentation:

4-2-101 Report to the Economic and Social Council on phase II (1992-1996) of the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific (1996)

4-2-102 Annual reports to the Commission on the progress of work carried out under this subprogramme (1996 and 1997)

4-2-104 Report to the Committee on the evaluation of the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific (1997)

4-2-105 Report to the Committee on the New Delhi Action Plan on Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific (1997)

4-2-106 Report to the Committee on Asian land transport infrastructure development (1997)

4-2-107 Report to the Committee on environmental and safety issues in transport (1997)

4-2-108 Report to the Committee on private sector participation in the development and operation of transport and communications (1997)

4-2-109 Report to the Committee on tourism development policy and planning (1997)

4-2-110 Reports to the Ministerial Conference on Infrastructure (3 in 1996)

4-2-111 Reports to the Intergovernmental Meeting on Tourism Development (3 in 1996)

(b) Substantive services:

4-2-201 Substantive servicing of the Commission sessions (1996, 1997)

4-2-202 Substantive servicing of the Committee on Transport and Communications (1997)

4-2-203 Substantive servicing of the Ministerial Conference on Infrastructure (1996)

4-2-204 Substantive servicing of the Intergovernmental Meeting on Tourism Development (1996)

4.3 Published material

(a) Recurrent publications:

4-3-102 Transport and Communications Bulletin for Asia and the Pacific (1996 and 1997)

4-3-103 Decade News (2 issues in 1996)

4-3-104 ESCAP Tourism Review (annual)

4-3-105 ESCAP Tourism Newsletter (biannual)

(b) Non-recurrent publications:

4-3-201 Guidelines on environmentally friendly transport (1997)(XB)

4-3-202 Prospects for container shipping and port development (1996)(XB)

4-3-203 Guidelines for private sector participation in ports (1996)(XB)

4-3-204 Transport of hazardous goods (1997)(XB)

4-3-206 Transport and communications intervention in the alleviation of poverty (1997)

4-3-207 Training of trainers manual for inland water transport (1996)(XB)

4-3-208 Information requirements for the management of inland water transport (1997)(XB)

4-3-209 Highway network development in the Asian republics (1996)(XB)

4-3-210 Land transport corridors between Central Asia and Europe (1996)(XB)

4-3-211 Trans-Asian railway route requirements (1996)(XB)

4-3-212 Revised Asian Highway map (1997)(XB)

4-3-213 Tourism development in countries along the Mekong River (1997)(XB)

4-3-214 Policy issues for expansion of tourism, strengthening of regional cooperation and promotion of intraregional tourism (1996)(XB)

4-3-216 Road safety in the region

4-3-2171 Tourism development in the Mekong River area (2 in 1995) [2 outputs postponed from 1994-1995]

(c) Technical material:

4-3-301 Transport policy planning models (1997)(XB)

4-3-302 Monitoring and coordination database in support of phase II (1992-1996) of the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific and the New Delhi action plan on infrastructure development in Asia and the Pacific (1997)(XB)

4-3-303 Format and software development for the Asian Highway database (1997)

4.5 Operational activities

(a) Advisory services:

4-5-101 Financial and economic evaluation of transport infrastructure development

4-5-102 Commercialization and private sector participation in transport

4-5-103 Port operations

4-5-106 Strengthening of national capabilities in the expansion of tourism

(b) Group training, seminars and workshops:

4-5-202 Multimodal transport, freight forwarding and logistics

4-5-203 Environment and safety in transport

4-5-204 Development of rural infrastructure

4-5-205 Development of small ports and inter-island shipping services

4-5-206 Commercialization and private sector participation in transport

4-5-207 Financial and economic evaluation of transport infrastructure development

4-5-208 Facilitation of maritime transport

4-5-209 Transport development, management and maintenance

4-5-210 Tourism development

4.6 Coordination, harmonization and liaison

4-6-001 Collaboration with, and inputs to, the ACC machinery, other bodies, organizations and departments within the United Nations system on matters relating to the subprogramme

4-6-002 Organization and servicing of inter-agency meetings relating to phase II of the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific and the New Delhi Action Plan on Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific

Subprogramme 5: Statistics

Current situation and orientation:

1. For the region as a whole, the level of statistical development and the availability of statistical information have registered improvements, while at the same time user requirements for statistics have increased markedly, especially in newer fields of interest calling for disaggregation by gender and other criteria. Moreover, statistical capabilities and data availability continue to vary enormously among the countries of the region. In the field of information technology particularly, the gap between the more advanced and the less developed countries appears to be widening.

2. The Statistics subprogramme will continue to assist member countries and groups of countries in developing and improving their capability to identify, collect, process, analyse and utilize the data needed for the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of development plans and policies; improve the availability of data on the region and its constituent countries through the gathering from member countries of demographic, social, economic and other statistics, and through the maintenance of those statistics in a form suitable for their retrieval and dissemination by various means; and to foster the utilization of modern information technology in the public sector in order to strengthen the ability at both the central and subnational levels to plan and manage economic and social development.

3. In the implementation of the subprogramme, consideration will be given to the priority statistical needs of the work programmes relating to regional economic cooperation, environment and sustainable development, and poverty alleviation through economic growth and social development, especially as expressed in regional plans of action in various fields. The statistical implications of global initiatives and themes such as the Agenda for Development, Agenda 21 and sustainable human development will also be taken into account.

4. In the biennium 1996-1997, stress will be placed on developing the Committee on Statistics as the focus of regional statistical development, in line with the recommendations of the United Nations Statistical Commission. This will entail greater involvement in the development, implementation and monitoring of statistical methodologies and standards, and a higher profile in the coordination of technical cooperation in statistics in the region.

5. Subject-matter emphases will include the implementation of the 1993 System of National Accounts (SNA) and the development of statistics on services; intensification of work on gender statistics and on the development and utilization of data on poverty; initial preparations for the 2000 round of population and housing censuses; and the further improvement of environment statistics and environmental and natural resource accounting.

6. Statistical information and public sector computerization work during the biennium will increasingly exploit the enhanced information technology infrastructure both within and outside ESCAP. Effort will be concentrated on fully operationalizing the ESCAP Statistical Information System (ESIS), including provision of on-line access, and on promoting electronic interchange and networking among national statistical offices of the region.